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FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

Elizabeth R. Nelson

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远离尘嚣




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(京)新登字 155 号

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

托马斯·哈代的《远离尘嚣》:英汉对照/(美)纳尔逊(Nelson, E. R.)著;陆薇译.—北京:外语教学与研究出版社,1996.12
(世界经典文学作品赏析)
ISBN 7-5600-1145-4

Ⅰ.托… Ⅱ.①纳…②陆… Ⅲ.英语-语言读物,文学评论 Ⅳ.H319.4:I

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(96)第 24443 号

托马斯·哈代的
远离尘嚣
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外语教学与研究出版社出版发行
(北京西三环北路 19 号)
北京外国语大学印刷厂印刷
新华书店总店北京发行所经销

开本 850×1168 1/32 8 印张 164 千字
1996 年 12 月第 1 版 1996 年 12 月第 1 次印刷
印数: 1—31000 册

ISBN 7-5600-1145-4/H·628
定价: 9.30 元

京权图字: 01-1996-0568

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND: Although Thomas Hardy was born into Victorian England, and is always considered a Victorian novelist, he shares a common interest with some twentieth century novelists. Like D. H. Lawrence, Ford Madox Ford and E. M. Forster, he is fascinated by England's past and her rural areas. The name "Wessex," as he himself explains, was taken from an old English history; he gave it to a district that was once part of an Anglo-Saxon kingdom.

He was born in this district, in Higher Brockhampton, near Dorchester (Casterbridge, in his novels), on June 2, 1840. Since he was a sickly child, he received his early education at home from his mother, who inspired his love of the classics. His father, a builder and contracter, gave him an early interest in architecture.

When he was about eight years old, he started school in Dorchester. His walk to school took him along country lanes, and he became familiar with rustic scenes. He continued school there until he was about sixteen, when he was apprenticed in the office of John Hicks, a Dorchester architect. He devoted much of his spare time during the years he worked here to his studies of the classics. In 1862, he went to London to work under a London architect, Arthur Blomfield. He continued his studies of the classics in London, both privately and by attending lectures at King's College. In 1867, he returned to Dorchester to work with Hicks in restoring churches.

LITERARY CAREER: While he lived in London, Hardy became interested in literature as a possible career. He wrote several poems and some essays, as well as a novel, *The Poor Man and the Lady*

(1868). The novel was rejected by publishers and destroyed. George Meredith, already established as a novelist, advised Hardy not to write social satire, but to try to write a novel with a highly complicated plot. The acceptance of *Desperate Remedies* (1871), which was published anonymously, launched Hardy's career as a novelist. Another novel, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1872), was also published anonymously, but Hardy did not achieve literary success until the publication of *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874). That same year he married Emma Gifford, whom he had met while restoring a church in Cornwall. He and his wife eventually settled at Max Gate, Dorchester, where Hardy spent the remainder of his long life.

LATER LIFE: At Dorchester, he wrote his major novels, including: *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). The novels were usually serialized in magazines before their first publication. The "controversial" subject matter of his books upset Victorian readers, and Hardy reacted by abandoning the novel form. He devoted his later years to writing short stories and poems (particularly, *Dynasts: A Drama of the Napoleanic Wars*, which was published in three parts, in 1904, 1906 and 1908).

In 1912, his first wife died, ending a rather difficult marriage. He married Florence Dugdale in 1914; she survived him and wrote one of the most important Hardy biographies. He died on January 11, 1928, and his ashes were buried in Westminster Abbey.

INTEREST IN NATURE: In most of the Wessex novels, nature is pictured as a hard, unrelenting force. Eustacia and Wildeve (in *The Return of the Native*) are not sympathetic to nature, and are eventually destroyed by drowning. Some of this harshness can also be found

in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, in scenes such as the one in which the storm threatens Bathsheba's wheat and barley, and in the death of Gabriel Oak's lambs.

The major impact of nature in this novel, however, is of a happier tone. The descriptions include views of nature at its prime: warm spring and summer days spent in sheep washing and shearing, and cold winter nights when the stars are at their brightest. The descriptions are not included only for their beauty; they are integral since they set the atmosphere, and should not be skipped over, as if they were in the way of the plot development.

Hardy's perception of the world of nature is very accurate; small details, like the buttercups which stain Boldwood's boots as he walks through a field on a spring day, show us how wide-awake Hardy's senses were to external impressions of nature.

Moreover, the novel contains Hardy's most complete picture of farm life. To be sure, this life is not always easy, but it provides for happy times at the malthouse, and feasts after sheep shearing. Rural England is at its best here, and some of the atmosphere of older pastorals can be found in Gabriel's characterization, occupation and closeness to nature. When he plays his flute, the world of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* is not far off.

WESSEX: With the selection of Wessex as the setting for his novels, Hardy assured his success as a novelist. The area, familiar to him from his childhood, can be located on a modern map. The Anglo-Saxon kingdom includes those southern counties from Surrey in the east, to the Bristol Channel and the Devonshire-Cornwall border on the west. It is rich in legend in the history of England, including its

Celtic, Roman, Saxon and medieval past. (Stonehenge, with its mysterious stone ruins and the gigantic earthworks of Maiden's Castle, near Dorchester, lie within its boundaries.) Hardy's Wessex is generally confined to the area of Dorsetshire.

It was more than just a physical location for him, however; he prized the economic and social order it had represented, as well as the manners and customs that formed a part of that order. He mourned the passing of these native customs and the changing character of the villages during England's rapid industrialization. He found a way to preserve the old order by capturing it in his novels.

Although the dialect he created for his rustic characters was more often "literary" than accurate, it does convey the simplicity, common sense and humor associated with the natives of this region. The value that these rustic characters placed on the past is sensed in the frequent anecdotes (such as those indulged in by the ancient malster in *Far From the Madding Crowd*). Hardy's retreat to the privacy of Max Gate is almost symbolic of his choice of the past greatness of rural England as the focal point of his work.

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD: The title was taken from the familiar, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," by Thomas Gray, the eighteenth-century poet. The poem describes the burial of the country people who lived "Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife." The title serves as an apt, though sometimes ironic, commentary on the novel.

The novel was a result of a request by Leslie Stephens, editor of the *Cornhill* magazine, for a serial. It appeared anonymously in *Cornhill* in 1874. It was first attributed to George Eliot, much to Hardy's an-

noyance. It can almost be termed "a novel of setting," since the rural life it describes forms the essence of the novel.

The plot is almost perfectly symmetrical, centering around Gabriel Oak. He is a prosperous farmer at the beginning, he suffers financial reverses, and he emerges as an even more prosperous farmer at the end. He meets Bathsheba Everdene and falls in love with her, patiently supports her through her romantic adventures, and finally wins her. There is very little wasted material in the story; incidents that seem to have little importance earlier in the book loom significantly later on. For instance, as Fanny leaves Frank Troy in his barracks, laughter is heard "hardly distinguishable from the gurgle of the tiny whirlpools outside." The gurgle of these whirlpools is recalled by the deluging rain that carries off the flowers on Fanny's grave.

Although Hardy never ignored the public's reactions to his serialized novels and won his success in popular magazines, he remained a craftsman who never lost sight of his own ideal of the novel.

OUTSTANDING FEATURES: In Hardy's novels the characters that succeed, and are generally the happiest, are the ones that remain in harmony with their surroundings. The best example in this novel is, of course, Gabriel Oak. The most interesting characterization, however, is the almost collective use of the rustics. They manage to retain their individuality, but they seem to have a communal personality. They view the action of their social "betters" and comment on it, in a Greek-chorus-like effect. In addition, they help the action to progress. A good example of this occurs when Joseph Poorgrass is sent to bring Fanny's body back to Weatherbury. He lingers at the Buck's Head Inn so long that the body is brought to the churchyard

too late for burial. Her body is then taken to Bathsheba at Weatherbury Farm for the night, and Bathsheba has time to open the coffin and discover Fanny's child.

The comedy associated with the rustics is almost Shakespearian. Hardy sympathizes with even the silliest characters (such as Poorgrass), and never laughs at them. Even Poorgrass can join in the merriment, as the tales of his timidity are presented. High spirits are again in evidence when Coggan coaxes Poorgrass to sing his "ballet" at the shearing feast.

Less important than Hardy's skill in depicting his rustic characters, but a distinct feature of his writing style, is his wide use of allusion. The unusual number of references, both classical and Biblical, is astonishing. The most effective allusions are the Biblical ones, since they seem to echo the rugged strength of the pastoral setting. The choice of Bathsheba's name is an obvious device, but the use of Adam's first view of Eve as a comparison for Boldwood's awakening to Bathsheba's charms adds more substance to the episode. The comparison of Bathsheba to a nymph, or to Venus, is less subtle, and references to Thor, Jove, Cyclops, etc., are often weak and ineffective, as well as incongruous.

Literary allusions are also included, such as Gabriel's bird's-eye view of Bathsheba as Milton's Satan first saw Paradise, (from *Paradise Lost*), and the quotation from *Macbeth* to describe Gabriel's lack of skill in describing his feelings for Bathsheba.

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD: BRIEF SUMMARY

Gabriel Oak, a prosperous young farmer, meets a beautiful, though vain young lady (Bathsheba Everdene), whom he decides to marry. She refuses his proposal, however, since she does not love him, and is not yet ready to marry. He promises to love her always, but vows never to ask her to marry him again. Shortly after, her uncle dies, and she inherits his farm at Weatherbury. She leaves Norcombe, and Gabriel, already disappointed in love and unaware of Bathsheba's new position in life, suffers a grave financial loss when his sheep fall into a chalk pit. He is forced to sell everything he owns to pay his debts.

Since he is unsuccessful in finding a place as bailiff or as shepherd, Gabriel makes his way toward Weatherbury. He helps to put out a fire in a hayrick and hopes to get a place as shepherd on this farm. He is surprised to find that Bathsheba owns the farm. She hires him as shepherd and he goes to the local malthouse to inquire about lodgings. At the malthouse he is welcomed by the villagers; as the group begins to leave, news is brought of the dismissal of Bathsheba's bailiff for stealing, and of the sudden disappearance of Fanny Robin, the youngest of the maidservants at Weatherbury Farm.

Bathsheba decides to manage the farm herself and goes to Casterbridge to the grain market. She is annoyed when she is ignored by one of the farmers, Mr. Boldwood. He has led a solitary existence on the next farm, and he has a reputation for being a confirmed bachelor. On a wild impulse, she sends him an anonymous valentine,

inscribed "Marry me." From Gabriel, Boldwood learns that the handwriting is Bathsheba's, and his interest in her is aroused. He falls in love with her, and one day, as she and her laborers are involved in washing her sheep, he approaches and asks her to marry him.

She refuses this offer, and when he begs her again and again to accept, she asks for more time. She seeks out Gabriel as he is grinding shears and asks his opinion. Gabriel is still deeply in love with her, but answers her honestly; he strongly disapproves of her conduct. She is angered by his reply and tells him to leave the farm. Gabriel agrees to leave immediately. The very next day her sheep are injured, and she is forced to send for Gabriel. He ignores her first request and then comes to save the sheep, when she pleads with him not to desert her.

Meanwhile, Fanny Robin is reported to have run away with Francis Troy, an army sergeant. She follows him to his new post and anxiously inquires about their marriage. He seems hesitant about his plans, but promises to meet her as soon as he can.

At Weatherbury Farm the rustics gather to help shear the sheep. After the shearing, a gay feast takes place, and Boldwood appears to act as host. He again asks Bathsheba to marry him and she is sorry for her foolish valentine when she reveals about it five or six weeks after sending it.

That night, however, she accidentally meets Troy and is charmed by his manner and his good looks. She meets him again during the hay gathering and is secretly pleased by his compliments. She is further impressed by his daring swordplay; she refuses to see how unstable a

character he is, and that he has little beyond his charm to offer. Gabriel tries to warn her about Troy; though he still loves her, he advises her that marrying Boldwood would be safer than marrying Troy. She meets Boldwood and firmly refuses to marry him, although she pities him and is sorry for her foolish Valentine. When she reveals that she loves Troy, Boldwood speaks out violently against him. Bathsheba follows Troy to Bath to warn him about Boldwood; when Troy hints about another beauty who is interested in him, she marries him to be certain of keeping him.

Troy returns with her to Weatherbury, and Boldwood offers him money first to marry Fanny, and then to marry Bathsheba. Troy shows him the newspaper report of his marriage to Bathsheba and throws the money into the road. Boldwood swears he will punish him some day. Gabriel's disappointment and sorrow at this rash marriage increases as he watches the effect of the news on Boldwood. Boldwood allows his farm to deteriorate and seems to have lost his stability.

Troy celebrates his new prosperity at a harvest supper and dance. Gabriel notices signs of a threatening storm which could ruin Bathsheba's harvest, but Troy ignores his warnings and insists that the farm workers join him in an all-night drinking party. Gabriel, with Bathsheba's help, manages to cover the gathered sheaves and save the crop.

Fanny Robin again appears in the story, painfully making her way to a poorhouse in Casterbridge. She uses her last bit of strength to reach the door and is carried inside, evidently very ill.

Bathsheba has become suspicious of her husband's interest in Fanny

and guesses how strong the attachment had been. He learns that Fanny asks him to meet her at Casterbridge, and he rides there the same day that news of her death reaches Bathsheba. In charity, Bathsheba sends Poorgrass for the body and arranges to have it buried in the churchyard. He delays at the Buck's Head Inn and arrives too late for the burial. Fanny's body is taken to her last known home—Weatherbury Farm—for the night, and Bathsheba cannot resist opening the coffin. She discovers the secret that Gabriel has hoped to keep from her: buried with Fanny is her child that died at birth. Troy returns at this point and insists that Fanny meant more to him than anyone else could. He arranges to have an elaborate monument placed on her grave and he personally arranges flowers, which are washed away in the evening's rain. Troy leaves Weatherbury and apparently drowns, although his body is never found.

Boldwood again begs Bathsheba to marry him and she finally agrees, although she insists on a waiting period of seven years, when Troy would be legally dead, or some trace of his body might be found. Boldwood prepares a Christmas party, during which the engagement would be announced. A surprise guest arrives and reveals himself as Troy. He orders Bathsheba to return to the farm with him, and, as she shrinks back from him, Boldwood shoots him.

Boldwood is convicted of murder, but his death sentence is commuted to imprisonment when the villagers plead for his life. Troy is buried with Fanny; Bathsheba slowly regains her health and her composure. Gabriel decides to leave Weatherbury and England and tells Bathsheba of his plans. She suddenly realizes how dependent she is upon him and how much his love means to her. Her own feeling for him is not the reckless passion she felt for Troy, but a quiet respect for his fine character. Remembering that Gabriel promised not

to ask her again, she goes to his cottage and asks him to stay as her husband. He agrees that her request is as it should be; the two marry and enjoy a life of quiet serenity.

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD: DETAILED SUMMARY

CHAPTER I.

DESCRIPTION OF FARMER OAK—AN INCIDENT

Gabriel Oak is introduced in rather neutral tones; he is far from the dashing hero of many novels, and seems to be a solid young man of the community, neither overly impressive nor unrespected. His outward appearance is proper and staid, rather than charming or fascinating, and his neighbors know him for his good character and judgment. He is far from being insipid or colorless, however; even though he is simple and straightforward, he is not a weak man. He has an air of dignity and self-confidence, and shows a quiet assurance and maturity beyond his twenty-eight years. Although established on his own little sheep farm, he is still a bachelor.

As he is in a field one morning, he spots a waggon making its way down the highway, through a spur of Norcombe Hill. The waggon is colorfully painted and loaded with household goods. Perched on top of the waggon is a very pretty young woman, wearing a bright red jacket. As Gabriel watches, the waggon stops, and the waggoner announces that the tail board has fallen off, and that he will run back to get it.

The young lady takes advantage of the pause to untie one of the wrapped parcels near her. Once she has satisfied herself that no one is in sight, she unwraps the enclosed mirror and spends some minutes in examining herself attentively and with evident approval. Gabriel

realizes that she is vain; there is no practical need for her to use the mirror, she merely enjoys looking at her reflection, perhaps dreaming of herself as a popular beauty.

As the waggoner returns, she slips the mirror back into its wrappings and the journey is resumed. Gabriel follows the waggon at a short distance and sees it stopped at the toll gate. The young lady refuses to pay the extra two pence that the gate keeper demands, and Gabriel resolves the stalemate by paying the extra fee for her. She seems indifferent to his kindness, not even feeling the need for an expression of gratitude, and even seems annoyed that she lost her point of dispute. The waggon goes on and Gabriel discusses the young lady with the gate keeper. The keeper finds her beautiful indeed, but Gabriel points out that she has obvious faults. The keeper suggests "pride," and Gabriel sadly adds "vanity."

COMMENT: The novel begins, and will end, with Gabriel. He serves as a kind of touchstone by which we may measure the characters and events of the novel. The opening description hints of his reliability in this respect; he is a self-effacing young man and yet observant and interested in happenings about him. His concern for other characters is evidenced by his remote, but interested, study of the young lady, and by his offering to pay the trivial fee she owes. His shrewd perception and unromantic nature also makes the reader implicitly trust him as the point-of-perspective.

CHAPTER II.

NIGHT—THE FLOCK—AN INTERIOR—ANOTHER INTERIOR

A beautiful description of a clear, cold winter's night on Norcombe

Hill, and its effect on an observer, opens the chapter. A solitary visitor would be struck not only with the starkness of the chalk and soil covered ridge, but by the sounds and the sensation of motion, not only of the trees and grass, but of the earth itself. The skies seem more brilliantly colored, and the stars brighter and especially close. Suddenly, a sound different from those of nature's can be heard: Gabriel's flute.

The notes are a bit muffled, since Gabriel is playing inside his little sheep hut. This special hut resembles a toy Noah's Ark; it is mobile and serves the shepherd as a temporary shelter, when the lambing season demands his special attention.

Gabriel is especially concerned with the birth of the lambs, since he has only recently acquired the stock and land, and the status of independent farmer. His entire investment is bound up in the raising of sheep, so proper care both of the sheep and the new lambs is essential to his success, and the sheep must be supervised personally. Gabriel stops playing and leaves to inspect his flock. He returns with a newly-born lamb that needs some special care. He places the lamb near the small fire and quickly falls asleep.

The interior of the hut is comfortable, but simple; instead of windows, two round holes with wooden slides serve to let in air. In addition to Gabriel's flute and some food, the hut contains whatever equipment he might need to care for his sheep. When the lamb, now warmed by the fire, begins to bleat, Gabriel awakes, instantly alert. He leaves the hut to return the lamb to the flock, and searches the sky for signs to guess the time of night. Even after he realizes that it is about one o'clock, he remains charmed by the beauty of the view. He sees a light that he at first mistakes for another star and walks

toward it. He finds a little shed built on the slope of the hill, and from the roof (which is nearly level with the ground, at that point), he sees two cows being tended by a middle-aged woman and a younger woman, who is wrapped in a long cloak. One cow has just given birth to a calf, and the other has been given bran-mash treatments. The older woman remarks that she is relieved that the cow is better, even though her rest has been broken in caring for it. The younger woman seems indifferent to the cow's fate; she wishes that they could hire a man to take care of their stock, and adds that the wind has carried off her hat. Since the bran supply has given out, the younger woman plans to ride to the mill early in the morning, even though the other woman reminds her that they have no side-saddle.

Gabriel becomes curious about the young woman; he wishes he could see her face, and imagines her to be a beauty. At this point, the girl drops her cloak and Gabriel recognizes her as the young lady who stared at herself in the mirror, as she sat on top of the waggon. After placing the calf near its mother, the two women take the lantern and leave. Gabriel returns to his flock.

COMMENT: There is little action in the first two chapters, as Hardy establishes both his rustic setting and his means of evaluating character and action: the "natural" world of rural England. In this peaceful pastoral setting (with especial focus on sheep raising), far from the busy city life, characters are given a chance to lead happy lives, if they will only remain true to their closeness with nature. Gabriel's connection with the world of nature is shown from the first sentence of the novel, in which he is compared to the rising sun. His last name suggests the oak's permanence and stability. His world is definitely unmechanical; although he keeps the family watch on his person, it is

not always accurate, and he relies on his neighbors' timepieces, or the position of the stars, or the length of shadows to tell him the time. He seems more "at home" out-of-doors, and well-suited to the life of a farmer.

The young lady he watches is quite different. She acts unnaturally; she shows her pride and vanity by viewing herself in the mirror, and doesn't even consider the need to thank Gabriel for paying her extra toll. She is indifferent to the care of the cows, while Gabriel carefully tends his lambs himself. His happiness and eventual success is promised by his basic honesty of character and his closeness with the world of nature. The young lady, on the other hand, seems destined for unhappiness and suffering, since she is so proud and so distant from the "real" world.

CHAPTER III.

A GIRL ON HORSEBACK—CONVERSATION

At daybreak on the next day, Oak goes to a grove of beech trees and finds the young lady's hat in a ditch. He takes it back to his hut and awaits the arrival of the young lady, who is riding towards him. She looks to see if anyone is around, and then lies flat backwards on her pony, as she passes under the level boughs of the trees surrounding the path. She rides on to Tewnell Mill, and Oak, amused and a bit surprised at her acrobatic feat, hangs up her hat in the hut and goes out to his flock. On her return, she takes the milk pail to the cow shed and Gabriel waits on the path to return her hat. She is startled by his sudden appearance from behind the hedge, and he is able to see her more clearly. Her beauty is set off by the modesty of a rural

maid; she is poised and composed as Gabriel stares at her, and it is he who blushes. She claims her hat and tells him she knows who he is. When he tells her that he had seen her on the way to the mill, she realizes that he had seen her antics, and she blushes, but Gabriel is even more embarrassed than she. He tactfully turns his head to give her a chance to regain her poise, but when he turns around again, she has gone.

For five days after this meeting, she comes regularly to the shed to milk the cows. She doesn't look for Gabriel and seems to be annoyed at his lack of tact. Gabriel regrets acknowledging his invasion of her privacy. He has been watching the shed on a particularly cold afternoon, and when he returns to his little hut, he leaves the ventilating holes shut, in order to warm the hut quickly. He ignores the possible danger of suffocation and falls asleep. He awakes to find the young lady trying to revive him; he blames the hut for being unsafe, but she reminds him that he was wrong in leaving the holes closed. She tells him that his dog led her there; he is grateful to her for saving his life and thanks her. She teases him by not giving him her name, and then leaves.

COMMENT: The sense of freedom and love of independence that the young lady enjoys is exemplified by her ride to the mill. Her acrobatic feat is "tomboyish," but also an indication of her disregard of conventional behavior, as well as of her youthful pleasure in just being able to ride through such a lovely scene.

The young lady has never found it necessary to thank Gabriel for helping her at the toll gate, or for finding her hat for her, but she repays this debt many times over by her rescue of

Gabriel from death. She, unfortunately, dispels the quiet mood in the hut by her insistence on teasing Gabriel about holding her hand and about discovering her name.

CHAPTER IV.

GABRIEL'S RESOLVE—THE VISIT—THE MISTAKE

Gabriel's interest in the young lady grows quietly but surely; he finds out that she is Bathsheba Everdene, and that she is staying with her aunt at a cottage nearby. He likes to repeat her name again and again; he watches for her without being able to put his feelings for her into exact words. She is totally unaware of his feelings; he spends hours thinking about her, and then desides to ask her to marry him. He dreads the day when the cows' milk would dry up and she would not return to the cow shed. When several days have passed without her coming, he tries to think of an errand to take him to her aunt's home.

When one of his ewes dies, he takes the opportunity of offering Bathsheba the orphaned lamb for a pet. Dressed carefully and tastefully, he sets out on a fine day. As he approaches, his dog chases the household cat behind some bushes, and Gabriel hears a woman's voice comforting the cat. He defends his dog, but receives no answer. He wonders if the voice was Bathsheba's and how his proposal would be affected by this unlucky accident.

He is a bit embarrassed as he meets Bathsheba's aunt; she tells him Bathsheba is out, and he asks her to tell Bathsheba only that "Someone" has called. He tells the aunt that he plans to propose to Bathsheba and questions her about Bathsheba's suitors. She indicates

that several young men are interested in her niece. Gabriel privately regrets his own "ordinariness," but feels that there is some hope for him, since he is the first to propose. He decides not to wait for Bathsheba, and starts to return home, but Bathsheba races after him. She tells him that her aunt made a mistake in sending him away from courting her, and in allowing him to think she had many suitors. The delighted Gabriel thinks that she is encouraging him, and tries to take her hand, but she slips it behind her. He promises her to work twice as hard on his farm, and to do anything to make her happy. But Gabriel has misunderstood her following him. She only wanted him not to have the idea that she was so admired; if she really wanted him to propose, she tells him, she would not have run after him. He asks her again to marry him, and she, confused by the openness of the world out-of-doors, is momentarily distracted. He offers to make her life a happy one; she may have a piano (he will play his flute to her accompaniment), a gig, flowers and birds (poultry). He will even publish the marriage (and any subsequent births) in the local newspaper. Although she would enjoy being a bride, the prospect of married life, especially with a husband she does not love, does not appeal to her.

She is not heartless, and tells him that she is sorry she can't marry him, even though he loves her so much. She is sorry now that she followed him, and tries to comfort him by telling him that she is better educated than he, and that he would be better off marrying a rich wife, since he is still a young farmer. He agrees that a rich wife would be a more practical choice for him, but it is she that he loves. When he again presses his offer, she refuses, and he promises that, though he will love and want her until he dies, he will never ask her to marry him again.

COMMENT: One of Bathsheba's main faults is revealed in this episode. She is selfish enough to want to be liked and admired without sacrificing anything herself. She refuses to be seriously committed to anyone; her impulsive following of Gabriel indicates that she will act on serious matters, without reflecting on the outcome of her actions.

Hardy makes use of irony in presenting Gabriel's promise. It is only at the end of the book, however, when Bathsheba remembers that promise and must act herself because of it, that the full impact of the promise is revealed. She is humbled because of it and becomes a happier woman.

CHAPTER V.

DEPARTURE OF BATHSHEBA—A PASTORAL TRAGEDY

At this point, Gabriel's fortunes really come to a low point. He discovers that Bathsheba has left her aunt's farm, and he doesn't know where she has gone. Her abrupt departure is more emphatic than her verbal refusal of his offer. It is hard for him to fall out of love; the flame still lingers after her departure, but her absence does not cause him to over-idealize her. His brief acquaintance with Bathsheba's aunt makes it difficult for him to get news about her; indirectly, he learns that she has gone to Weatherbury (about twenty miles away), but cannot find out if her stay there will be permanent.

In addition, catastrophe strikes him on his farm, through the inexperience of one of his dogs. His old sheep dog, George, is past his prime, and Gabriel hopes to replace him with one of his own puppies. The young dog thinks he is doing his job by keeping the sheep on the run; one night, the force of the running sheep causes the

flock to break through a safety rail above a chalk pit. Gabriel is awakened by the violent ringing of the sheep bells and hurries out to discover that about two hundred ewes, with their unborn lambs, are dead or dying at the foot of the pit. He had bought and stocked the farm with a credit-like arrangement; his entire investment has been lost. His first thought is to pity the dead animals and especially the lambs that never had a chance to live. He is relieved that he hadn't married Bathsheba before this terrible calamity struck. Oak sells the rest of his stock, his tools, and his land to pay his debts; he is left with little more than his clothes.

COMMENT: Gabriel's double loss is accepted with resignation and perseverance. His reaction to his troubles gives the reader a good glimpse of the nobility of his character. In addition, the depth of Gabriel's relationship with nature is shown in his first reaction to the sight of the dead sheep, that is, pity for them. He doesn't think of his financial loss until he has mourned their sad end, and felt relief that Bathsheba has been spared this reversal. His total lack of selfishness is a fine foil to Bathsheba's preoccupation with herself, as revealed in the last chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FAIR—THE JOURNEY—THE FIRE

Two months later, Gabriel is discovered at the hiring fair in Casterbridge. About two or three hundred men wearing some special sign to show their specialties (for instance, shepherds carry crooks) are waiting to hire themselves out as carters, waggoners, thatchers, shepherds, etc. Gabriel, still dignified despite his hard blow, is trying to find a place as bailiff, but shepherds seem to be in demand. After he buys a crook from a smith and exchanges his overcoat for a

shepherd's smock, it seems that now bailiffs are in demand. Two or three interested farmers turn away when they learn that Gabriel had once been a sheep farmer himself. By late afternoon, Gabriel has still not been hired, but plays his flute gaily, rather than give in to despair. He earns a few pennies by his playing and learns that another fair will be held at Shottsford, ten miles beyond Weatherbury (five or six miles away). Since Weatherbury people are known to be pleasant and interesting, Gabriel decides to sleep at Weatherbury on his way to Shottsford.

He walks along for three or four miles, until it begins to get very dark. When he finds a waggon on the side of the road, apparently deserted, he decides to sleep in the waggon and save lodging money. After a meal of bread, ham and some cider, he falls asleep in the hay piled in the waggon; he wakes to find the waggon moving. It is now about nine o'clock (according to the stars); Gabriel listens to the two men in the front of the waggon (Billy Smallbury and Joseph Poorgrass), as they discuss a proud young woman who is mistress of the farm on which they work. Gabriel wonders if this could be Bathsheba, but decides that it is only a wild guess. He slips off the waggon, deciding to sleep in a field, rather than walk into town. He sees an unusually bright light about a half mile away, and realizes there must be a fire. He makes his way across a field towards the fire and finds a straw stack burning. The stack is nearly destroyed, but a wheat rick, as well as a whole series of stacks, is dangerously near. Then men who have come to fight the fire are hopelessly confused; Gabriel hurries over to supervise as best as he can. He organizes the workers and personally does much of the work to put out the blaze; a young woman watches him, beyond the light of the fire. She asks who the shepherd is, and sends word to thank him. Gabriel hopes to ask for a job as shepherd, and questions the workers about the owner

of the farm. He learns that the farm belongs to a young lady who inherited it after the death of her uncle. Although he is wet and dirty from fighting the fire, Gabriel hurries over to the young lady whom the laborers have pointed out. He asks if she needs a shepherd, and, as she lifts her veil, he sees Bathsheba again. Humbly, he repeats his request.

COMMENT: In at least two places in the novel, Hardy makes use of a popular device for suspense in hiding Bathsheba's identity. Wilkie Collins (author of *The Moonstone*, *The Woman in White*), had made the device famous, and when he began his career as novelist, these novels were pointed out to Hardy as good examples to follow.

Gabriel's strength of character in being able to persevere, despite his disappointments and setbacks, is captured in his playing the flute at the hiring fair. His playing is quickly rewarded by some pennies that he desperately needs, but it also will make him a welcome newcomer to the Weatherbury community.

CHAPTER VII.

RECOGNITION—A TIMID GIRL

This meeting is awkward for both of them; Bathsheba feels some pity, as well as pride, at the change in their circumstances. She does need a shepherd, and the rustic laborers agree that he is a perfect choice. She sends Gabriel to her bailiff and promises to send some refreshments for her workers to Warren's Malthouse. When Gabriel asks the bailiff about lodgings, he is told to go to the malthouse, and someone there can help him. As he walks toward the malthouse,

Gabriel thinks about this surprising meeting and of Bathsheba's new status. As he reaches the churchyard, he meets a poorly-dressed girl, and asks her the way to the malthouse. He senses that the girl is troubled in some way, but she only asks him how late Buck's Head Inn is open, and refuses any offer of help. Since Gabriel is strange to the neighborhood, he cannot tell her; she asks him not to reveal, until a few days have passed, that he saw her. When she shivers in the cold, Gabriel charitably gives her his one spare shilling, and then walks on towards Weatherbury. He knows that the girl is troubled and sad—her pulse beats like the trembling of a frightened lamb—but he can do nothing else for her.

COMMENT: Again Hardy keeps the identity of the woman Gabriel meets on the way to the malthouse a source of suspense and curiosity. This "veiled woman" is not identified until the end of the next chapter.

Gabriel's instinctive generosity is viewed in his sharing (literally) his last shilling with her. He realizes that she is in trouble, and would like to help her, but she is shy of confidences and he is a stranger in the village and cannot guess at her difficulty. The incident has further use in the novel; since Gabriel has been so kind to her, the young lady writes to thank him, and lets slip some information about her present condition.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MALTHOUSE—THE CHAT—THE NEWS

The malthouse is a thatched, ivy-colored building, with a stone-flag floor, a large kiln (oven), in the center, and a settle, or bench, for the

malt drinkers' comfort, on the side of the room. The old malster has seen several generations pass; when Gabriel enters and is greeted by the men, the malster tells him that he knows Gabriel's family and several people at Norcombe. He orders a clean mug for Gabriel, but Gabriel insists that the mug, dusty from the ashes of the fire, is good enough for him, and is immediately accepted by the rustics as a welcome addition to the group. The members of the group of rustics are identified: Henry Fray, who insists his name is "Henery," merry Jan Coggan, congenial Mark Clark, Jacob Smallbury, the malster's son, and bashful Joseph Poorgrass.

After the rustics tell some amusing stories about Poorgrass's timidity, a brief silence follows, broken by Gabriel's questions about the farm and its new owner. He finds it hard to keep the villagers from rambling on about Farmer Everdene and his family, and from telling stories about the village past. He finds out very little about Bathsheba's past (she was not too pretty as a child), and the villagers hint that most of the business of the farm is carried on by the bailiff, and that he is not too honest. Gabriel changes the subject and talks about the malster's age. With little encouragement, he gives his past history and judges that he must be over a hundred years old.

As the mug of malt is passed around, Gabriel's flute is noticed and Henery recognizes Gabriel as the man who played the flute at the fair. Gabriel confesses his need of money, but the villagers still welcome him, despite his poverty. They request a tune, and Gabriel plays until he is complimented by Laban Tall (a man with so little individuality that he is constantly referred to as "Susan Tall's husband"). The villagers recognize Gabriel as a clever man and are delighted to have him join their group. Tall starts to leave the malthouse, and the group begins to break up for the evening. Henery hurries in with

news that the bailiff has been dismissed for stealing; Bathsheba caught him with a half bushel of barley and discovered that at least five sacks had been stolen. If he leaves immediately, she promises not to prosecute him. Tall returns with more news; Fanny Robin, the youngest of the maidservants at Weatherbury Farm, is missing; the possibility of suicide is suggested, and some hints about her running away with a soldier are made. The rustics hurry back to the farm to start the search for Fanny, as Gabriel reflects on the events of the evening and decides to get his belongings from Norcombe.

COMMENT: This chapter is wonderful for its comedy. The anecdotes and stories are amusing themselves, and the humor increases as the malster, or another rustic, rambles on and on, as Gabriel patiently waits for news of Bathsheba.

Hardy sketches the individuals in some detail (too long to be included here), and the reader is left with a distinct impression of each man. The novelist often accomplishes this by identifying a particular trait with a man (such as Poorgrass's timidity, or Coggan's sharing of the drinking cup). Yet, the group is so carefully united (especially by their common tie with the past) that each member acts in harmony with the others.

The fact that the chapters were presented serially is evident by the tantalizing or "teasing" ending. In this chapter, we receive the sensational news of Fanny's disappearance; Victorian readers were sure to want to see *Cornhill's* next issue to find out more about it, and to see if Gabriel would replace Bathsheba's bailiff.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HOMESTEAD—A VISITOR—HALF-CONFIDENCES

Weatherbury Farm is described as a Classic Renaissance building, with later additions in different architectural styles. It had apparently once been a manor hall in the center of the estate; its age is evident from the moss which covers its walls. The front of the house is formal and seems little used; it is the back door which is used for most of the business on the farm.

Bathsheba and Liddy are sorting papers and various articles left by Bathsheba's uncle, when a gentleman appears at the front door. He announces himself as Mr. Boldwood, a neighboring farmer, but Bathsheba sends down word to say that she is not at home. She feels too dust-covered and preoccupied to see him. He has come to inquire if there is any news of Fanny Robin. Bathsheba questions Liddy (who has become more of a companion and confidant than maid since Bathsheba's arrival) about him. Liddy reports that he had sent Fanny to school and had helped her to get her place at the farm. He is described as a confirmed bachelor. The little Coggan boy tells them that Boldwood gave him a penny for opening the gate, and that Boldwood had asked about Bathsheba. Bathsheba teases one of the servants about not being married, and when Liddy asks if Bathsheba has ever had a proposal, she hints mysteriously about Gabriel and says that the young man has not been quite good enough for her. Their conversation is interrupted by the arrival of the laborers.

COMMENT: Hardy's architectural background is noted in his description of the farm house, and the use of such terms as:

"finials" (crowning ornamental architectural detail) and "ver*miculations*" (*worm eaten*).

From Boldwood's first attempt to meet Bathsheba, his progress is marked by misunderstanding and unfortunate circumstances. Had Bathsheba been prepared to welcome her neighbor, her curiosity about him would have been quickly satisfied. Had Boldwood met Bathsheba, her impression upon him might have been less devastating. His sensible reserved nature might have rejected her youthful impetuosity and her remoteness, made romantic by her remaining a stranger, would have been less emphatic.

Bathsheba's rejection of Gabriel as a suitor marks her as a proud, selfish young lady. She has never really investigated his qualities; he is dismissed as a possible husband only because she feels that he is not her social equal.

CHAPTER X.

MISTRESS AND MEN

About a half hour later, Bathsheba officiates as mistress of the farm and pays her laborers for their time and goods. She announces that the bailiff has been dismissed and that she will manage the farm on her own. Reports about Fanny are presented; the Newmill Pond has been dragged; one of the men has been sent to Casterbridge to look for her (Gabriel has quietly inquired for Fanny at the Buck's Head Inn). With his constant advice, Henery tries to take over the farm management, but Bathsheba firmly refuses his help. Since Gabriel needs an assistant, Cainy Bell (mistakenly so named instead of

"Abel") is proposed and accepted. Bathsheba speaks to Gabriel very cooly, insisting on establishing her new position. Billy Smallbury returns from Casterbridge and suggests that Fanny had left with one of the soldiers of the Eleventh Dragoon Guards. The name of the young man is not revealed, but he is supposed to be a sergeant. Bathsheba sends word of this conclusion to Boldwood and addresses the group about her new authority. She leaves the room with the pride and dignity of a queen; Liddy trails in her wake in unconscious parody of her mistress.

COMMENT: Bathsheba has reached the peak of her happiness; she is admired and respected in her new position of authority. Her pride and vanity are gently mocked by Hardy as he describes Liddy's assuming the airs and sense of importance that are so vital to her mistress.

CHAPTER XI.

OUTSIDE THE BARRACKS—SNOW—A MEETING

On a dark, snowy night, a small figure approaches the army barracks in a small town north of Weatherbury. The scene is bare and desolate; the only sound is the muffled striking of the bell. The figure is that of a young woman; she tosses snow balls (not very expertly) at one of the windows. She finally succeeds in striking the right window and gets the attention of someone inside. She asks for Sergeant Troy, and the man admits that he is the sergeant himself. She tells him that she is Fanny Robin; he is surprised that she has followed him such a distance. When she asks if he has arranged for her marriage, he presents several difficulties (she needs clothes, a special license must be obtained, he must get an officer's permission, etc.).

She is disappointed to discover that he has forgotten to get the permission before, but he explains that her arrival here was totally unexpected. She asks him to meet her at Mrs. Twill's rooming house. As she leaves, a sound of laughter can be heard, but since it is not very clear she may have missed it.

COMMENT: It is interesting to notice that Fanny is always pictured alone; she seems to have no friends except Troy, and in the few episodes in which she appears she is either travelling to find him, or waiting to meet him. An extra note of sympathy is constantly struck for her, in her companionless existence.

CHAPTER XII.

FARMERS—A RULE—AN EXCEPTION

On the next market day, Bathsheba makes her first appearance in her new role as farm-manager, at the public cornmarket in Casterbridge. She is the only woman at the market, and feels a bit nervous about the impression she will make and the reception she will receive. She decides that she must be practical to succeed as a buyer and seller, and she begins to speak with confidence and poise. She retains her femininity despite her practical manner, and she is welcomed as a nice contrast to the rougher male group. Only one man seems immune to her charm; he is a mature gentleman, characterized by his dignity, and Bathsheba guesses that he is unmarried. After the fair, she returns home with Liddy and asks about this unusual man. She is annoyed at Liddy's lack of information, but, when the man passes them on the road Liddy recognizes him as Mr. Boldwood. Gossip about him reports that he has been unhappy in love, and Bathsheba prefers this romantic version to explain his long bachelorhood to the

more realistic explanation that Boldwood has just never paid any attention to women before, and is a controlled and reserved man by nature.

COMMENT: Bathsheba's constant wish to be admired and respected finds its fulfillment at the market; she is the center of attention (as the only woman) and is grateful for the reception she receives. She is not satisfied by this general acceptance, however, and resents the indifference of the farmer (who eventually is identified as Boldwood).

His cool reserve annoys her; had she only welcomed him when he called at her house, this indifference might have been changed. As it is, Boldwood has a mysterious, remote air, that Bathsheba girlishly translates as resulting from an unhappy love affair.

CHAPTER XIII.

SORTES SANCTORUM—THE VALENTINE

On the thirteenth of February, Bathsheba and Liddy are sitting together chatting, and Liddy suggests that Bathsheba use the Bible and key to guess at her future husband. This seems to be an old custom, and the rust marks on one of the pages of the *Book of Ruth* suggest that the *Bible* has been used for this purpose many times before. Bathsheba turns the book, but does not identify any young man that might be indicated. Liddy has noticed that Boldwood seems to be in Bathsheba's thoughts, and, as Bathsheba writes out a valentine for little Teddy Coggan, she suggests that Bathsheba send the letter to Boldwood instead. The gesture seems to be so opposed to common

sense that Bathsheba tosses a hymn book (to see if it would fall open or shut) to help her make her decision about sending it. The book falls down shut, and Bathsheba directs the envelope to Boldwood, sealing it with the words, "Marry me." She then sends off the valentine.

COMMENT: However headstrong or wild her actions had been in the past, Bathsheba had never been made to suffer for them. At best, the valentine is a crude joke; but the apex of her success has been reached, and the tide of circumstance, and retribution, is beginning to turn against her. Her earlier actions had involved only herself; now that she is toying with another's feelings just for her own amusement, she must in turn be made to suffer.

CHAPTER XIV.

EFFECT OF THE LETTER—SUNRISE

Boldwood seems fascinated by the valentine; he stares at it so intensely that he seems to be asking it what its significance might be. Until dusk, he keeps the valentine on the mantel; when he prepares for bed, he places it in the corner of the mirror in his room. He is always conscious of it; its arrival has unleashed a flood of feelings. He endlessly speculates on the sender and tries to guess why it was sent. His sleep is haunted by these endless questionings. The dawn freshness of the outdoor world seems particularly in evidence at daybreak, but Boldwood is still concerned with the mysterious valentine, and hardly notices anything around him.

The mailcart appears and he is given a letter, but it is meant for

Gabriel. He sees Gabriel walking in the distance and volunteers to bring the letter to him. Gabriel is on his way to the malthouse, and Boldwood follows him there.

COMMENT: Never has Boldwood's poise and reserve been so disturbed; the emotions long controlled and almost forgotten begin to stir. Boldwood has had little interest in women before, and not because they did not express an interest in him. The little mystery surrounding the valentine adds another dimension to this situation; he is curious about the sender.

The slow chipping away at his character and mental equilibrium begins; gradually, he must change his temperament and manner. It is ironic that he is the one man who would take such a valentine so seriously, and become so affected by it.

CHAPTER XV.

A MORNING MEETING—THE LETTER AGAIN

The malster is at his breakfast of bread and bacon, when he is joined by Henery, Moon, Poorgrass and other carters and waggoners. Bathsheba's management of the farm without a bailiff becomes the topic of discussion. Henery feels that leaving Bathsheba in charge can only lead to disaster, but his statement is colored by his own disappointment in not being made bailiff. Her pride and vanity are also criticized, but her cleverness and her evident good education seem to be saving graces for her. After a pause, Bathsheba's piano and her change of her uncle's furniture for more elaborate chairs and tables are commented upon. Gabriel, radiating health and vigor, enters carrying four newly-born lambs. He and Cainy have been busy all

night, caring for the ewes and the new lambs. Since he has no lambing hut, he asks if the lambs could be placed by the fire in order to warm and strengthen them. The malster first reminisces about Norcombe, and then the conversation turns back to Bathsheba. Gabriel threatens anyone who would speak out against her with the power of his fist.

Gabriel's qualifications are examined and admired; everyone agrees that he would be the perfect choice for bailiff because of his cleverness, his accomplishments (especially in being able to tell time by the stars), and for his farming skill. He agrees that he would like to be bailiff, and thinks he would make a good one, but he supports Bathsheba's right to manage the farm in her own way, and he rejects the idea that he is being poorly treated.

Boldwood enters and gives Gabriel the letter from Fanny Robin. She thanks him for his help and tells him that she is going to marry Frank Troy. Troy's history is revealed by Boldwood; he is illegitimately descended from nobility. He has had a good education, and worked as a lawyer's clerk in Casterbridge, but he enlisted as a soldier, and seemed to have ruined any good prospects he might have had.

Cainy Bell brings Gabriel news that two more ewes have had twin lambs; before Gabriel returns to the flock, he marks the lambs he has brought to the malthouse with Bathsheba's initials. Boldwood hesitantly follows Gabriel, and, finally gathering enough strength to make the request, asks Gabriel if he knows whose handwriting is on the anonymous valentine. Gabriel identifies it as Bathsheba's, and he realizes that the letter must have been sent anonymously for Boldwood to ask. Boldwood tries to pass off his questions lightly, but

any suggestion of humor would be lost by a glance at his tortured face. Regretting his revealing of his private affairs to a stranger, he returns to his house to set the valentine on the mantel again, and to reflect on the news of its sender.

COMMENT: Boldwood's slow movement away from his former character is evidenced in his questioning Gabriel about the valentine. He would hardly have allowed his private affairs to be even hinted to a casual stranger, but the impact of this valentine has set feelings and reactions into motion that cannot be retracted.

Fanny's letter follows Gabriel's kindness to her. It allows the plot to develop enough for the reader to realize that Fanny's elopement may be a fact, but not her marriage. Hardy rarely wastes incidents in his novels; this episode is a good example of one action causing another.

CHAPTER XVI.

ALL SAINTS' AND ALL SOULS'

At the end of the weekday service, the congregation at All Saints' Church is startled to see a young soldier in his red uniform striding up the aisle. The curiosity he excites causes them to delay their departure and await the outcome of this unusual visit. The curate and the soldier converse briefly, and then the clerk and his wife are called to the chancel steps.

The rumor quickly spreads that a wedding is about to take place. The clock strikes half past eleven, and the young lady has not yet

appeared. The soldier grows more visibly embarrassed as the moments pass; he stands rigidly at attention, never moving.

The long delay causes more whispers and giggling, and then, by the time the noon hour is struck, there is dead silence. The curate and the clerk leave the chancel; the soldier finally turns to face the curious crowd, then strides firmly out of the church.

As he crosses the paved square opposite the church, he meets a young woman, obviously distressed and terror-stricken when she greets him. She has gone to All Souls' Church by mistake and waited there for him. She asks if the wedding can take place on the next day, but he has been so embarrassed and annoyed by her mistake that he tells her he will not go through such an experience again for a long while. When she begs him to forgive her and to tell her when they can be married, he only mutters, "God knows."

COMMENT: Troy speaks the words "God knows" in light irony, but the tragic impact of his careless statement strikes him later in the novel. It is to Troy's credit that he arranges for the wedding; from Boldwood's description of him, it is a more responsible act than one would expect of him. His treatment of the bewildered Fanny is anything but kind, however, and Hardy arranges for Troy to regret bitterly his harshness.

Hardy's concept of a brooding Fate that controls man's destiny is evident in poor Fanny's mistake in locating the right church. The names of the two churches are quite similar, and this small mischance helps to cause Fanny's final sufferings and guides the outcome of the events of the rest of the novel.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN THE MARKET-PLACE

Boldwood sees Bathsheba enter the Casterbridge market on Saturday. Since her last visit here, Boldwood's feelings have changed remarkably. He had ignored her before, but curiosity about the sender of the valentine causes him to examine her more closely. He thinks she is quite beautiful but wonders if he is wrong, since the men at the market treat her casually. He asks a neighbor if Bathsheba is considered a beauty and is satisfied that he is not wrong. He wonders why she had done so strange a thing as sending him the valentine, and if she has any interest in him.

As he watches Bathsheba talking with a young farmer, he realizes he is jealous and longs to interrupt them. Bathsheba is aware of his attention and feels a sense of triumph in capturing his interest. She hardly considers Boldwood as a serious choice for a husband, and is genuinely sorry for her foolishness in sending him the valentine. She resolves to apologize the next time they meet, but at the same time thinks that the apology is as bad as the original joke. If he thought she was laughing at him, the apology would be even more insulting; if he took her seriously, he would see the apology as another example of her calling attention to herself.

> **COMMENT:** The way for Boldwood's fall into the devastating obsession to win Bathsheba has been prepared by his aborted visit, and her foolish valentine. He knows little about his new neighbor; in fact, he knows little about women and must inquire of another man if she is considered beautiful.

The Biblical allusion to Adam's first sight of Eve is a brilliant comment on the action here. Like Adam, Boldwood is to be betrayed by this new Eve; but unlike Adam, Boldwood only glimpses Paradise, and never really enjoys it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BOLDWOOD IN MEDITATION—REGRET

Boldwood is a respected member of the community, and his gentlemanly style makes him the closest thing to aristocracy or landed gentry that the village can claim. He lives a solitary life as tenant farmer on Little Weatherbury farm; his prosperity is shown in his stock of fine horses. After the horses have been fed, Boldwood would often pace up and down the barn and meditate until dark.

It appears Boldwood is a rather reserved person, but in fact he has fine control of his emotions. If his peaceful life is disturbed by any outside force, he is apt to react violently. He has little sense of humor and is usually rather serious. When Bathsheba sent her teasing valentine, she little realized what an effect it could have on a person like Boldwood.

On an early spring day, during the time when the sheep are set out to graze, Boldwood looks across the level fields to Bathsheba's farm and sees Bathsheba with Gabriel and Cainy Bell. As he recognizes Bathsheba, Boldwood's face betrays his feelings; he plans to speak to her. His long period of isolation from love is over; his passion for her can no longer be contained.

Bathsheba and Gabriel are engaged in the task of getting a sheep to

"adopt" one of the twins of another ewe, as a substitute for its own dead lamb. As Bathsheba looks up to see Boldwood at the gate, she blushes, and Gabriel, noticing her change of expression, turns to see the visitor. He realizes that this meeting has something to do with Bathsheba's letter, and that she has been toying with Boldwood's feelings in some way.

Boldwood understands that the two are aware of his presence, and he becomes confused. He is overcome by shyness and is hesitant to speak. He is unused to courting practices, and his inexperience in love and wooing makes him uncertain of his actions and of her response to his visit.

On the other hand, Bathsheba is sure that Boldwood has not come this way accidentally, or on a specific errand. She is quite troubled by his attention to her and promises herself never to encourage him in any way, but the consequences of her foolishness have been too firmly set to be altered now.

> **COMMENT:** Hardy slows the action of the story in order to draw a more precise picture of Boldwood. It is important to remember that Boldwood seems calm and quite controlled, but might act violently if provoked. His sudden passion for Bathsheba is easily explained, if the reader recalls that he has firmly controlled his emotions for years until the shock of receiving the valentine brought their release.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SHEEP—WASHING—THE OFFER

Eventually Boldwood does call on Bathsheba, but she is not at home. Since he is a farmer himself, Boldwood understands that her busy life as manager of the farm leaves her little time for social life. His failure to see her, however, causes him to further idealize her in his imagination, and, by the end of May, he is determined to find out her feelings for him.

When he asks for her at the farmhouse, he is told that she is at the sheep-washing; at a circular, basin-like pool, several of her workers, including Gabriel, are herding her flock of sheep through the pool to wash away any dirt or impurities from their valuable fleeces. It is a perfect spring day; the meadows and trees never seemed greener. Bathsheba looks her best in an elegant new riding habit, as she watches the washing operation.

Boldwood greets her and Bathsheba leaves the pool to gain more privacy in her talk with him. As they near a bend in the nearby river, Boldwood calls to her and she stops to wait for him. He asks her to marry him, and she tries to remain composed as he describes his feelings for her. Trying to remain as dignified as he is, Bathsheba replies that she respects him, but does not love him, and is not justified in accepting his proposal.

Boldwood's passion breaks his control; he begs her to let him repeat his statement of love and to listen to his pleas. He has been able to make the decision to marry her partly because her valentine message

indicated an interest in him. He is willing to marry her, even if she does not love him. Bathsheba again refuses and tries to explain her action as thoughtless. Boldwood has become so obsessed with the idea of winning her that he will not listen to any refusal. He promises her anything she wants, if she will only accept.

Although she is sympathetic, and feels responsible for causing his suffering, Bathsheba cannot return his love. She begs him to give her time to think. Boldwood presses her not to refuse absolutely and to allow him to speak to her again about marriage. She grants him this permission, but warns him not to hope for her. After she leaves, Boldwood stands as if stunned, until he returns to a sense of reality and abruptly returns to his home.

COMMENT: This is only the first of Bathsheba's painful confrontations with Boldwood; her foolish desire to be admired, without committing herself in any way (as if she were a rose, or a work of art created only to be viewed behind an enclosure) is not natural, indeed even inhuman, and she is forced to accept the consequences of her folly. Her pride must be humbled, and she must realize that she is mortal and part of the human community, before she can find true happiness.

CHAPTER XX.

PERPLEXITY—GRINDING THE SHEARS—A QUARREL

Bathsheba weighs Boldwood's proposal objectively. She feels that he is kind in promising her so much; the match is socially desirable, and he is a respected man in Weatherbury. If she thought of marriage for its own sake, Boldwood would make an excellent husband, but she

neither wants, nor loves him. In addition, she enjoys managing her farm, and does not wish to give up her independence. She is still uneasy about her part in encouraging Boldwood, and so she seeks out Gabriel (who is grinding shears for the sheep shearing) to get his opinion.

She sends Cainy Bell away and turns the grindstone for a few minutes, and then asks Gabriel to let her hold the shears so that she might talk to him. She is curious about the rustics' reaction to her talk with Boldwood, but Gabriel keeps her attention on the shears. In reply to her questions, Gabriel reports that not only do the men think the meeting an odd one, but also they expect Bathsheba and Boldwood to be married within a year.

She cries out that the idea is foolish and that she has come to ask Gabriel to control the rumor. Gabriel is surprised and relieved by the news, but rejects Bathsheba's request to spread the story that Boldwood has not proposed.

Bathsheba corrects him for calling her by her first name, and insists that the marriage will not take place. She is torn between pity for him (as a disappointed lover) and anger (that he has stopped loving her). Since she values his honesty and frankness, she asks his opinion of the situation. He tells her that her actions were not suited to any thoughtful, worthy woman, and adds that she probably resents his rudeness. Bathsheba is angry at the truth of his evaluation and dismisses his rebuke as best as she can, but loses her temper. Stung by his candor, she orders him to leave the farm at the end of the week. Gabriel calmly replies that he'd rather leave at once. She angrily orders him not to let her see his face again. Gabriel agrees and leaves her, moving with calm dignity.

COMMENT: Bathsheba meets her match in independence in Gabriel, but his independence is tempered by a maturity she has not yet achieved. She half-expects his answers and opinions, yet asks them; she is accustomed to flattery, or strongly wishes for it, and finds Gabriel's frankness annoying. She is like a petulant child when she orders him from the farm; the allusion to Moses leaving the presence of the Pharaoh is almost mock-epic in the context.

Gabriel is of course patient and understanding with his difficult mistress; he is perfectly aware that she is still too young to judge fairly. He never loses his dignity, even when faced with her "tantrum."

CHAPTER XXI.

TROUBLES IN THE FOLD—A MESSAGE

Bathsheba's triumph over Gabriel is short-lived. The next day her sheep wander into a field of clover and are blasted. Bathsheba scolds her workers for not getting the sheep out of the field sooner; as they talk, several sheep fall down in the field, seriously injured.

Tall remarks that the only way of saving them is to pierce their sides with a special instrument, and that Gabriel is the only man skillful enough to perform the operation. Bathsheba at first refuses to send for Gabriel, but the prospect of dead and dying sheep forces her to humble herself. She sends Laban Tall for Gabriel; she worries that he may already have left. Gabriel, however, sends back word that he will not come until she makes her request politely; when another sheep dies, Bathsheba hurries to the house to write Gabriel a note,

including the words, "Do not desert me, Gabriel!" Anxiously, they all await the outcome; Gabriel finally appears without any sign of his small victory. She reproaches him, but gently, and Gabriel is confused by her change of manner. He hurries to the field and saves the sheep by inserting a small tube, which allows the air surplus to escape. When the sheep are out of danger, Bathsheba, confident that he still loves her, asks Gabriel to stay, and he agrees.

COMMENT: Bathsheba's independence is slowly waning, as she acknowledges her need for Gabriel. On the other hand, he establishes his independence of her; when he returns to the farm, it is on his own terms, and a new relationship with her is established.

It is ironic that Bathsheba is forced to send for Gabriel, the day after she dismissed him. The rustics are comic in their perplexity, but they manage to agree on one thing: Gabriel is the only possible savior for the flock. Bathsheba is forced to accept the situation and send for Gabriel.

Gabriel, in his own way, enjoys the situation. In accord with his conscience, and his perception of "things as they should be," he waits until he is properly requested to come. He declares a kind of independence by this act, but Bathsheba has not lost her hold over him, as is shown by his pleasure at her welcome and at her smiles.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE GREAT BARN AND THE SHEEP-SHEARERS

On the first of June, the village people gather to help shear the sheep in the great barn. The old barn, resembling either a church or a castle, is well suited for the operation. Modern techniques are still far from Weatherbury, and the shearing is performed as it had been many years before. Weatherbury seems unaffected by the passing of the years and actually seems to resist change.

The rustics are supervised at the various tasks by Bathsheba, assisted by Gabriel, who seems to be the manager of the entire procedure. Bathsheba watches him as he shears a sheep; Gabriel is silently content to have her attention and to listen to her chatter. The shorn sheep is marked by Cainy with Bathsheba's initials, and the fleece is taken away and placed with the others. Gabriel's happiness at the progress of the work and with Bathsheba's presence is marred by the appearance of Boldwood. He and Bathsheba talk in low tones, and Gabriel is sure that their conversation does not involve sheep-shearing. Bathsheba leaves the barn and returns dressed in a new riding habit.

As she prepares to ride away with Boldwood, Gabriel is so upset that he accidentally cuts a sheep. Bathsheba scolds him and Gabriel realizes that she is upset about something more than the sheep. She tells Gabriel that she is going to see Boldwood's stock, and leaves him in charge. The laborers comment on the significance of the visit. Henery fails to see why such an independent woman needs a husband. Henery is still annoyed that he has not been chosen as bailiff; he

reports that he thinks Boldwood kissed Bathsheba at the sheep washing. Oak springs to Bathsheba's defense, but Henery insists that his judgment is to be trusted, and that he is just as clever as Gabriel. Somehow the malster fancies himself slighted, and both he and Henery must be pacified. The mood is lightened when Maryann asks if there is any man available for her to marry. Gabriel continues to work quietly; Bathsheba has hinted that he is to be bailiff and he looks forward to the post, not for its advancement, but for its closer relationship with her. If she marries Boldwood, the whole situation would change. However badly she treats him, he still loves her and is anxious to help her. Cainy interrupts his thoughts and brings his attention back to the work and the feast to follow. Poorgrass especially is looking forward to the eating and drinking, since his body particularly needs "nourishment."

COMMENT: Despite the complexity of the Boldwood-Bathsheba-Gabriel relationships in the chapter, the impression of calm serenity in the village of Weatherbury is maintained. The village remains relatively the same; fifty years have no meaning for its inhabitants. The rustics labor at the same tasks, and in the same way, that their forefathers had. Although Hardy realized that villages like Weatherbury had disappeared, or were being depopulated, his lasting respect for them, and for the tradition they represented, is particularly evident and herein expressed extremely well.

CHAPTER XXIII.

EVENTIDE—A SECOND DECLARATION

A long table for the shearing supper is drawn up to the farmhouse;

one end is set inside the parlor window, so that Bathsheba sits at the head of the table, but not *with* her workers. Even the presence of the unwelcome dismissed bailiff, Pennyways, does not dim her excitement; she asks Gabriel to assist her by sitting at the bottom of the table and acting as a host to the workers near him. Boldwood arrives shortly after, however, and Bathsheba asks Gabriel to give him his place; Gabriel silently gives up his seat to the farmer, who seems unusually happy and gay.

After the supper, Coggan begins the singing, to be followed by Poorgrass, with a song of his own composing. Young Coggan is so overcome by laughter at the "ballet" that his father reprimands him, but Poorgrass is so insulted that he will not continue. Jacob Smallbury restores peace by starting a seemingly endless ballad. Even after sundown the merriment continues; Bathsheba, now occupied with her knitting, surveys the scene from her window. Gabriel misses Boldwood from his place at the table, and, as Liddy lights the candles inside the house, Gabriel sees Boldwood sitting near Bathsheba.

The rustics request a song from Bathsheba; she asks Gabriel to accompany her on his flute and sings a song with a verse referring to a soldier and his bride. Boldwood joins in the song, and the rustics enjoy the performance in complete silence. Gabriel observes Boldwood's actions toward Bathsheba and the rustics, and guesses that Boldwood's position seems more secure.

Bathsheba bids them all good-night and closes the window and shutter. Oak leaves, and the rustics begin to follow, complimenting Pennyways on his "return" to honesty.

Inside the house, Boldwood has been urging Bathsheba to marry

him. She promises to try to love him and to marry him, if she thinks she could make him a good wife, but she will not give him a solemn promise that night. She refuses to promise anything more than that, at the end of five or six weeks, she will probably be able to promise to marry him.

Boldwood is satisfied as he leaves. Bathsheba is ashamed of her past behavior and very impressed by Boldwood's love. Her joke may have brought grave consequences, but she finds a kind of pleasure in her conquest of such a man as Boldwood.

COMMENT: The intensity of the Boldwood-Bathsheba relationship is offset by Gabriel's calm study of the two, and the gaiety of the rustics. Hardy gives the reader a good view of the simplicity of the rustics' pleasure: goodnatured banter and songs that are old favorites. They are goodhearted enough to accept Pennyways back into their community and to readily forgive his crimes, since he is apparently making restitution. The chapter also offers us an insight into the easy relationship between Bathsheba and her workers; each knows his place, and the harmony is evident in their asking a song of Bathsheba, and her acceptance.

The song itself is a good example of Hardy's use of irony and his development of suspense. Bathsheba sings of a soldier with a "winning tongue" who seeks a bride. Hardy tells us that many of those present will remember the gay bride and the clever soldier, but does not say whether the memory will be pleasant or bitter. The hint of the soldier, and some connection between him and Bathsheba's story, serves as an intriguing introduction of Troy in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SAME NIGHT—THE FIR PLANTATION

Since Bathsheba has dismissed the bailiff and has taken over the management of the farm herself, she has assumed the task of inspecting the farm grounds at night. She makes these trips with a dark lantern, turning it on occasionally to examine some dark corner. Although she is fairly safe, and the farm so well managed that very little could be found wrong, Gabriel usually makes his own inspection before Bathsheba does, without allowing her to know about it.

On the night of the shearing feast, she makes her customary inspection. Only the usual barnyard sounds disturb the peaceful stillness of the night. She makes her way back to the house by a path through a group of fir trees; the thick needles and branches makes this path seem to be a passage through a long, dark hall. Even though the darkness makes this path a possible danger point, Bathsheba usually finds it safe. This time, however, she is startled to hear the sound of footsteps from the other end. She assures herself that the unknown person is probably a villager returning home, and regrets meeting him at the darkest point of her own walk. As the two are about to pass each other, Bathsheba feels something tug at her skirt and is nearly thrown off balance.

A man's voice asks if she has been hurt and explains that they have somehow become entangled. He asks for her lantern, and Bathsheba is startled to see a soldier revealed by the sudden light. His spur has caught on her long skirt; Bathsheba refuses his offer to unfasten it, but the rowel of the spur has wound itself so firmly that she has

difficulty in setting herself free. He bends to try to help her, and his movement allows her to notice that he is young, handsome, and a sergeant. Although he thinks the dress may have to be cut away from the spur, he continues trying to unravel the threads, using the time to cooly examine Bathsheba's face and to comment on her beauty.

His compliments confuse her, but she realizes that he has been delaying his task purposely. She is afraid that a sudden wrench would further damage her skirt, or worse still, pull it from her. The soldier continues his compliments, until she finally manages to separate the skirt from the spur. He explains that he is no stranger to the area and identifies himself as Sergeant Troy. Carefully inching past him, she moves slowly down the path, and then hurries into the house to question Liddy about him.

Liddy reports that Troy has a reputation for being a gay, clever young dandy. He is said to have had a good education and to be descended from nobility, but he seems to be wasting his opportunities by enlisting as a soldier. Despite her better convictions, Bathsheba begins to be charmed by the soldier and actually accuses herself of not being too polite to the young man. She is rather pleased by his compliments; while Boldwood might be a determined lover, he never has complimented her beauty.

COMMENT: Hardy has prepared the reader for the introduction of Troy very craftily with Bathsheba's song in the previous chapter. Troy has the same winning tongue as the soldier of the song; he uses his clever words to charm Bathsheba. We already know of her vanity and her desire for admiration, and it is not surprising to see how readily she accepts Troy's compliments,

despite her embarrassment and her fundamental good sense.

The episode of the entangling of her skirt and Troy's spur is obviously contrived, but it allows Bathsheba and Troy to become acquainted and makes her a "captive audience" for his compliments. The setting is "romantic," a dark isolated path which seems perfect for some exciting adventure to unfold.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE NEW ACQUAINTANCE DESCRIBED

A character sketch of Troy takes up most of this chapter. He lives constantly in the present, never caring for the future, or worrying about the past. He is never disappointed, since he has few hopes; his honesty is "divided," he is fairly truthful with men, but feels free to lie to women. His vices seem minor or excusable (since he is still a young man); his wrongdoing results from acting impulsively, while he is rarely seen in a virtuous act.

He seems very active, but his acts are inspired by the heat of the moment, and as the heat cools, his plans and work cool with it. However quick his understanding and strong his character, he has little force of will. He is well-educated for a soldier and gifted in flattering speeches (especially to women); almost unconsciously he can spin flattering comments, and he hardly ever considers their impact.

A week or two after the shearing, Bathsheba, feeling rather relieved at Boldwood's absence, goes out to the hayfields to watch the haymakers. In one section, the hay is already being loaded; Troy works with the others, as if he were a knight offering his services to his

lady-love. Troy notices her as soon as she comes into the field; he walks toward her, leaving his hayfork on the ground. Bathsheba blushes and focuses her eyes on her path.

COMMENT: The description of Troy is almost directly opposite that of Gabriel; Troy is everything Gabriel is not. Troy's honesty and dependability is imperfect; he is impulsive, and pretends to be upright and moral only when the occasion suits him. He enjoys flattering pretty women, and is quite expert at clever phrases, since he practises very often. He is like Bathsheba in one respect; he never weighs the outcome of his actions or remarks. Hardy points out the falseness of Troy's character even in the episode at the hayfield; Troy is not helping the haymakers for any serious reasons, but seems merely to want to impress Bathsheba. The alert reader recognizes what Gabriel sees—Troy is rarely what he seems to be.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SCENE ON THE VERGE OF THE HAY-MEAD

Troy addresses Bathsheba as "Queen of the Cornmarket," and apologizes for his very free conduct during their first meeting. He manages to turn his apologies into more compliments. Bathsheba feels that his freedom should be checked, but rather enjoys his compliments and finds it hard to be rude to him. In spite of himself, she laughs at his remarks, as he explains that since he adores only pretty women his religious worship is restricted. His compliments completely captivate her, and Troy notices the effect of his remarks.

He continues his task of winning her and says that he would be con-

ceited to think she had any interest in him. Bathsheba agrees that he is conceited, but Troy carefully steers from a discussion of his faults to his pleasure in her conversation. He insists that he fell in love with her at first sight; Bathsheba tells him that this is impossible and tries to break off the conversation. When she asks him the time, he tries to present her with a gold watch that is an heirloom in the family of the Earls of Severn. He begs her to keep it and assures her that he will be pleased to think she has the watch; by this time his statements have become more serious than he himself realized. She returns the watch and agrees to allow him to call on her during the rest of his stay. Bathsheba is so distracted and so excited by his compliments that she leaves the hayfield, unable to face the haymakers. She wonders what the significance of this meeting might be, and how much of Troy's remarks she can believe.

COMMENT: This chapter might well be named "The Winning of Bathsheba." Practised as he is in the art of wooing, Troy immediately chooses exactly the right manner to gain her favor. He compliments her beauty and charm and asks little in return: her approval and her company. The approach is perfect; Bathsheba thinks she has found someone who can give her the compliments she enjoys, without asking anything more than her permission to admire her. Her common sense begins to desert her; she can hardly summon up enough strength to resist accepting the watch.

Troy, however, is also caught in his own trap. His clever speeches and dramatic gestures (such as impulsively offering her his watch) enable him to win her interest, but Troy finds himself being more serious about his admission of love than he at first realized. Bathsheba's beauty and charm have won him, and this

meeting is a turning point in both of their lives.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HIVING THE BEES

Late in June, Bathsheba watches a swarm of bees settling in the orchard. Many times the bees have been quite "cooperative" and have settled in low branches, making it easy for a worker to catch the bees in a hive. This year, as has happened before, however, they have been late in swarming and have chosen a high bough which is difficult to reach which mean that ladders and long poles have to be used.

Since most of her workers are busy at the haymaking, Bathsheba decides to hive the bees herself. She dons gloves, a large hat and a heavy veil and climbs up the ladder, only to be stopped by Troy's arrival. She hurries back down the ladder and drops the hive. Troy offers to shake the bees into the hive for her; she insists that he wear the protective veil, hat and gloves. His appearance in this attire is so ridiculous that she starts to laugh, and their relationship becomes even more informal. While he is busy with his work, she uses the time to freshen her appearance. He finishes the hiving and descends from the tree; he asks her help in untying the veil. To ease the embarrassment of this close contact, she asks about his demonstration of the sword exercise.

She has heard accounts of his skill in handling a sword; she would like to see a performance. He promises to give her an exhibition, if she will wait until the evening, since he must arrange to get a sword. He urges her to meet him; when she cautiously suggests bringing Liddy, he coldly refuses. She is anxious to see the exercise—and per-

haps to meet him—and agrees to come.

COMMENT: Hardy's familiarity with rustic customs and duties is again in evidence in this chapter. For the simple villagers of Weatherbury, the passing of the various seasons is noted not necessarily by changes in the weather, but by the varied tasks performed at different times of the year. The spring means the time for washing the sheep, the summer brings shearing, haymaking and hiving the bees. Hardy takes advantage of this calendar to match the developments of his story; since Bathsheba and Troy's relationship grows in the summer, their love assumes a summer quality, intense, but short-lived.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE HOLLOW AMID THE FERNS

At eight o'clock that evening, Bathsheba makes her way toward a plot of land near a hill opposite her home. This section is full of tall groups of ferns; in one place the earth forms a natural valley, surrounded by ferns. She pauses and starts for home again; when she thinks how disappointed the sergeant will be, she decides to meet him, as she promised. Troy greets her as she reaches this tiny valley and produces his sword.

He starts the sword drill, explaining his movements as he performs. Bathsheba enjoys watching the blade flash in the setting sun; her adventurous spirit is excited by the display, and she overcomes any qualms she has about this odd meeting as she becomes absorbed in the performance. Troy tests her courage by quickly flashing the sword around her. She is frightened that she might be hurt, but

Troy's skill leaves her unharmed. He warns her to stand very still and Bathsheba is thrilled by the whistle and gleam of the circling blade. He climaxes his display by neatly cutting off a lock of her hair, and compliments her bravery. He urges her to let him continue and kills a caterpillar that is crawling on the front of her dress, without her even feeling the point of the sword. He insists that she is perfectly safe, despite the razor-sharp edge of the sword, since his swordsmanship is so perfect.

As she sits down on some heather, Troy tells her he must leave and that he will keep the lock of her hair as a memento. He puts it away carefully, and as he comes close to taking his leave, bends down and kisses her. Bathsheba, overcharged with emotion and feeling a bit guilty, bursts into tears.

COMMENT: The sword exercise is a good indication of Troy's appeal; he is so different from anyone she has ever known. His manly skill gives him an adventurous, foreign air; he is totally confident in his skill and is bold enough to risk her life to prove it. In comparing this talent to Gabriel's devoted and practical abilities in caring for his sheep, Troy's experience seems more glamorous, but far less useful and beneficial.

Troy's ability to handle his sword well causes an emotional rather than a rational response in Bathsheba; his performance thrills and frightens (like a dangerous circus act), and precludes an objective testing. At this point, however, Bathsheba is not interested in patient and careful study (such as Gabriel would require), and is immediately captivated by Troy's strong emotional appeal.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PARTICULARS OF A TWILIGHT WALK

Against her better judgment and instinctive recognition of his weakness, Bathsheba finds herself in love with Troy. The love is far from rational, and if any other woman presented the circumstances of their relationship to her, Bathsheba would probably advise her against further involvement. Bathsheba is too overcome by her own feelings to be able to analyze her attachment to Troy. She could speak to Liddy about Boldwood, since she feels only respect for him; her love for Troy has to be kept to herself.

Gabriel is aware of her infatuation and feels quite troubled by it; not only because of his own love for Bathsheba, but because he recognizes Troy's weakness of character. He takes the opportunity to talk to Bathsheba about her treatment of Boldwood when he meets her one evening, as she is returning from a walk. Bathsheba denies that she will marry Boldwood and Gabriel can no longer restrain himself from expressing his opinions. He points out that Boldwood's courtship is widely known and that the villagers are confident of an early wedding date. Bathsheba strongly defends her position; she respects Boldwood and he has urged this marriage, but she refuses to accept his proposal. Gabriel blames Troy for ruining Boldwood's hopes and warns her that Troy is not to be trusted; her reputation might be ruined by her association with Troy.

Bathsheba eagerly defends Troy and explains that his modesty hides his good works; she uses, as an example of this, Troy's habit of entering church by an old tower door and seating himself, unnoticed, in

the rear. Gabriel is distressed at her strong defense of Troy and at her attachment to him.

Gabriel assures her that he still loves her, but, for the sake of her reputation, begs her to marry Boldwood. She angrily orders him from the farm, but he dismisses this order as if it came from a child. He tells her that he is tired of helping her through troubles she causes to herself, and he agrees to leave if she will hire a responsible man to help her manage the farm. He adds that she should feel grateful for his staying on, since he could raise his own position if he should decide to leave. He continues to work for her only because of his devotion for her; he apologizes for his abruptness and insists that he is only concerned for her happiness. Although she is secretly delighted by his faithfulness, she sends him away. Gabriel worries about leaving her in such a deserted area, but he sees Troy join her and he hurries home. He passes the churchyard on his way and notices that the tower door (supposedly used by Troy) is so undisturbed by use that ivy grows across it.

COMMENT: Hardy subtly underscores Troy's dishonesty and lack of sincerity with the episode of the unused tower door. It is just like Troy to lie about his church-going without bothering to see if his lie could be detected. It is quite ironic that Gabriel is the one to discover Troy's lie; Gabriel is still clear-sighted enough to detect it, for Bathsheba is so blinded by Troy's deceitful charm that she would probably never notice the unused door.

CHAPTER XXX.

HOT CHEEKS AND TEARFUL EYES

Bathsheba arrives home excited, but also a bit sad. Troy kissed her again, as he said good night, but he also told her that he was leaving to visit friends at Bath. She feels she must write Boldwood and firmly refuse his offer of marriage. She had intended to wait for Boldwood's return from a short trip to tell him this, but now she wants him to have the letter as soon as possible.

As she walks to the kitchen to find someone to deliver her note, she hears her woman servants discussing her marriage to Troy. She bursts into the kitchen and questions the women about their gossiping; they admit that the talk concerned her. She insists that she has no interest in Troy, but gives herself away by continuing to defend him. She warns them that she will dismiss anyone who speaks against him. She leaves the letter and hurries back to the parlor, scarcely able to control her emotions. Liddy follows and tries to apologize; she promises that she will refute any future gossip by stating that Bathsheba is too much of a lady to be in love with Troy.

Bathsheba surprises Liddy by revealing that she indeed does love Troy; she regrets her denial of her love and asks Liddy to swear that Troy does have a good reputation. Liddy's hesitation angers Bathsheba; by this time Liddy is thoroughly confused by Bathsheba's rapid changes of temperament, but finally promises to think well of Troy and to keep their conversation a secret. She has been so upset by this exchange that she announces that she will leave Bathsheba's service.

Bathsheba pacifies her by telling her that she is more companion than servant; Liddy's departure would leave Bathsheba without a friend. The two rejoice over their renewed friendship, but Liddy asks Bathsheba to try to control the violence of her passionate feelings about Troy. She finds this an intensely female trait in Bathsheba and mourns her own lack of it.

COMMENT: Troy's notorious reputation is well known by the villagers; they are far from blinded by his charm. Unlike Gabriel, Troy has no friends among the villagers; up to this point in the story, it seems that his only friends are female.

Bathsheba's woman servants are especially understanding of Troy and his hold over Bathsheba. They are not necessarily malicious in their gossip, but since they are not involved in a relationship with Troy, they can manage to see him realistically and to accept the stories about him as truthful.

CHAPTER XXXI.

BLAME—FURY

Bathsheba wishes to avoid any meeting with Boldwood, so, on the following evening, she prepares to take advantage of Liddy's invitation to visit her married sister. Liddy has been given a week's holiday, and Bathsheba decides to join her at Yalbury for a day or two. She leaves Gabriel and Maryann in charge of the farm and, just after a thunderstorm freshened the surrounding area, leaves the house. She enjoys her pleasant walk, until Boldwood suddenly appears in her path. He looks totally unlike his former self and he is so occupied with his thoughts that he does not notice Bathsheba until

they actually meet.

He asks her if she is afraid of him, even though he loves her; Bathsheba tries to comfort him and to continue on her way. Boldwood prolongs the meeting by questioning her about the finality of her decision and then by asking for her pity. Bathsheba manages to control her behavior under these difficult circumstances, but Boldwood seems nearly mad as he pleads with her. He reminds her that she first encouraged his interest, that she is the first woman he ever loved, and that she has so nearly promised to marry him that his pain is now doubly severe. She agrees that her valentine was a poor joke and explains that she did not realize that what might be an idle flirtation for other men was a serious matter to him. His repeated reproaches and charges, as well as pleas for her pity, upset Bathsheba and she tries to calm him. She asks him to forgive her and to accept the situation cheerfully. He finds this suggestion heartless; he is still torn between rejecting her forever and begging her to accept him.

She tries to explain that, although she is not hard-hearted, she finds it difficult to love anyone. He refuses to see her as a cold woman, however, and tells her that he knows that she loves Troy. He turns his anger on the soldier for robbing him of Bathsheba; when she admits she loves Troy, he regrets having fallen in love with her, and having lost his honor and reputation.

She is so terrified by his words and conduct that she reminds him that she is only an unprotected girl; his conduct, she contends, is ungentlemanly. Boldwood forces her to admit that Troy kissed her; he curses Troy and prophesies that someday Troy will have to repent and feel as miserable as he (Boldwood) does now. Despite Bathsheba's pleas for Troy, Boldwood vows to punish him; he regrets

blaming Bathsheba and now directs his wrath and disappointment at his successful rival.

Bathsheba is shocked by the man's violence; she has always known him as a reserved, quiet man. She is glad that Troy is at Bath, and not with his regiment, as generally supposed; she fears that his return would involve a disastrous meeting with Boldwood. She thinks Troy should be warned, but, on the other hand, he might think her foolish if she insisted on his danger. She sits down to consider the situation and ignores the signs of the approaching evening, intent only on Troy.

COMMENT: The half-deranged man who curses Troy is far from the cool, reserved gentleman that Bathsheba first saw at the Casterbridge market. His curse is tragically prophetic; Troy will suffer a loss similar to Boldwood's. Hardy opens a new line of suspense in the story with Boldwood's vow to punish Troy; the punishment will destroy them both.

CHAPTER XXXII.

NIGHT—HORSES TRAMPING

The quiet peace of the night in Weatherbury, and on Bathsheba's farm, is disturbed around eleven o'clock by someone taking one of Bathsheba's horses and hitching it to a light carriage. Maryann is awakened by the noise and, when she sees the apparent robbery, hurries to report it at the nearest house, Coggan's. Coggan calls Gabriel to investigate, and the three hear the sound of the horse in the distance. Gabriel decides to ride after the robber and he and Coggan borrow two of Boldwood's horses, since none of Bathsheba's are suit-

ed for a chase. Coggan and Gabriel track the horse and carriage, long after the sound stopped directing them in their pursuit. They realize that the horse has gone lame; Gabriel is confident that they can easily catch up with the robber, since he will be delayed by the slow horse and by the sleepy gatekeeper at the turnpike.

Gabriel calls to the gatekeeper to stop the thief; he is surprised to discover Bathsheba driving the carriage. Bathsheba explains that she is on her way to Bath and asks what they are doing. She is upset that they have made such a mistake and even borrowed Boldwood's horses; she had left a note in chalk on the coach-horse doors, but, of course, it was not visible at night. She realizes that she should be pleased by their sense of responsibility and she thanks them for all their efforts. Her horse has been temporarily lamed by picking up a stone in her shoe; Bathsheba sends them home and continues on towards Bath. Gabriel and Coggan agree to keep the episode secret.

After her meeting with Boldwood, Bathsheba had spent some time considering her problem. She had finally decided that she must warn Troy about Boldwood and, hard as it was, she must take Gabriel's advice and give up Troy. She began to feel sorry for herself but she made up her mind to search for Troy at once, foolishly promising herself that he would strengthen her in her resolve to break off their friendship. It is evident, however, that she was hoping she would at least see him once more. Although the journey to Bath would be difficult, especially since she would have to start at night, Bathsheba decided not to go on to visit Liddy and her sister, but to return to the farm and prepare for the longer trip. She planned to see Troy and take her leave of him, rest her horse, and then ride on to see Liddy. She hoped, in this way, to keep her visit to Bath a secret, but she misjudged the distance, and her workers' suspicion of robbery made

this scheme a failure.

COMMENT: Hardy's skill in maintaining suspense for his magazine readers is again evident in this chapter which is similar in structure to Chapter VI. In both chapters Hardy hides the identity of a person who turns out to be Bathsheba. Whereas in the earlier chapter Gabriel fought the fire on her farm with her workers, in this one, the reader guesses that the rider Gabriel chases is Bathsheba, but her actual identification is not made until the climax of the chapter, which creates an effect of surprise similar to that of revealing Bathsheba as the young lady who owns Weatherbury Farm.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IN THE SUN—A HARBINGER

Bathsheba remains on at Bath for two weeks without any further explanation of her absence than a note to Maryann saying that she was still detained on the business which took her to Bath. The men begin the harvesting of the oats during a terrible drought. As they work, Maryann tells them that she has had a warning of some trouble; she dropped the door key and broke it. Coggan and Gabriel, who is helping with the harvesting for Bathsheba's sake, see Cainy Bell running toward them. He has been away for a few days, since he had a finger infection, and could not help with the farm work. The villagers remark that only accidents like this give them time to enjoy some leisure.

All of the workers gather around Cainy to hear his news, but he is frustrated in telling his story, since his long run so soon after eating

has caused him to choke. He finally manages to say that he had seen Bathsheba with a soldier, and that the two appeared to be a "courting couple." His choking, coughing and sneezing make the rustics impatient, and Coggan finally gives him some cider to relieve this difficulty. Cainy, however, drinks the cider so quickly that the drink only adds to his troubles; it spills over his clothes and keeps him sputtering and coughing. The interruptions by the villagers make poor Gabriel more impatient than ever to hear Cainy's story; Cainy finally manages to tell him that the very attentive soldier with Bathsheba was Sergeant Troy. Gabriel's curiosity about the two grows as the rustics question Cainy about Bath. He tells them of the customs of the inhabitants (their drinking of the famous spring water causes Matthew to comment on native customs seeming barbaric to outsiders), and of his own adventures in the city. Gabriel questions him about Bathsheba; Cainy describes how beautiful she looked as she strolled with the handsome soldier. He continues talking about Bath and its people and finally admits that he saw little more of Bathsheba. The men try to get him to swear that it really was she and Cainy insists that, although he won't swear to it, he is certain it was. Gabriel is naturally upset by the news and tries not to show his disappointment, but Coggan notices his reaction and tries to comfort him. He reminds Gabriel that since Bathsheba cannot be his, it makes no difference whose sweetheart she is. Gabriel replies that he has been telling himself the same thing.

COMMENT: The same technique of suspense is used in a totally different manner in this chapter. Hardy adds humor to spice the reader's interest in Bathsheba's visit to Troy. Cainy is no story teller; he mixes up his episodes and time and brings in irrelevant material. In addition, he keeps his listeners (and the reader) in suspense, since he takes so long to tell his story, as he

suffers from coughs, choking, and his friends' misguided efforts to help. However amusing the manner of Cainy's narration might be, his news is still serious; the reader is additionally motivated to read on to discover what happened when Bathsheba met Troy in Bath.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HOME AGAIN—A TRICKSTER

That same evening, Gabriel is relieved to see Bathsheba return in her carriage with Liddy. He leans on Coggan's garden gate to watch the gathering darkness, until he is greeted by Boldwood. Boldwood asks for Bathsheba at her home, but he is told that she cannot see him; he decides that she has not forgiven him for his conduct at their last meeting. As he starts home, he sees Troy coming back to the village and is determined to speak to him.

Boldwood meets Troy carrying a carpet bag and introduces himself. He tells Troy that he feels that Troy has been treating Bathsheba badly; he also informs him that he is aware that Troy is supposed to marry Fanny. Troy notices Boldwood's severe manner (and the club-like stick he carries) and decides to endure his comments as patiently as possible. He tries to explain to Boldwood that he cannot marry Fanny; he suggests that he is too poor to accept the responsibility.

Boldwood accuses him of taking Bathsheba away from him and asks him to leave her alone. If he will do this and marry Fanny, Boldwood promises Troy fifty pounds at once and five hundred pounds for Fanny on her wedding day. Troy pretends to be interested but he reminds Boldwood that Fanny is only a servant. Boldwood produces the

money and the sergeant accepts it; when he teases Boldwood by saying that he has only Troy's word to carry out the bargain, Boldwood reminds him that there is still five hundred pounds (plus an extra "bonus" for Fanny) waiting for him on his wedding day, and Troy would hardly want to lose that.

A sound of footsteps is heard on the road; Troy tells Boldwood that Bathsheba is coming to meet him, and that he will make his farewell. Bathsheba greets Troy very affectionately (as Boldwood listens to their conversation from his hiding place); she tells him that she will be alone in her house and expects him to visit her there. Troy promises her he will join her in a few minutes; after she leaves, Troy teases Boldwood about his strange bargain. Troy really prefers Fanny, and now Boldwood has made this match worthwhile. Boldwood leaps to attack him; Troy manages to save his life by reminding him that Bathsheba would really suffer if he was harmed.

Now Boldwood insists that Troy marry Bathsheba, or her reputation will be ruined. He promises to pay Troy the five hundred pounds at once, and agrees to give him an additional twenty-one pounds that he has with him. Troy insists that they call on Bathsheba, and when they reach her house, he goes inside for a candle. He hands Boldwood a newspaper to read by the light of the candle and points out a paragraph which announces Troy's marriage to Bathsheba.

He ridicules Boldwood's schemes; he adds that, as bad as he is, he would never allow a woman to be a matter of sale in a marriage. He reveals that Fanny has been missing for some time, although he has searched everywhere for her. He further ridicules Boldwood's love, by pointing out that Boldwood was ready to believe the worst about her on very little evidence. He feels that he has taught Boldwood a

lesson, and throws the money into the road.

Boldwood angrily shouts at him for playing such a trick and promises to punish him someday. Troy merely laughs at him and locks himself inside the house, as Boldwood leaves to walk around Weatherbury's hills and valleys all night long.

COMMENT: A good contrast in character is shown in Boldwood's bargain. He instinctively knows that a man like Troy could be bribed; he offers the money generously to save Bathsheba from him and to maintain both her good reputation and Fanny's. Troy seems to reject the money contemptuously, but had he not married Bathsheba and been secure in a position of importance on a prosperous farm, he might well have accepted the money as a "bonus" for marrying Fanny.

He seems to have an almost diabolic nature as he teases Boldwood first about accepting the money, and, even more cruelly, when he lets him think that Bathsheba has invited Troy for a private visit late at night, and does not reveal that Bathsheba and he have been married at Bath.

CHAPTER XXXV.

AT AN UPPER WINDOW

Very early in the next morning, Gabriel and Coggan walk toward Bathsheba's house and see Troy apparently well at ease, leaning out of an upper window. Coggan remarks that Bathsheba has evidently married Troy; he notices that Gabriel has turned very pale and tells him to try to control his reaction. Gabriel is quite distressed by this

hasty marriage; he wonders why it was arranged so secretly, since Bathsheba's frank nature would have indicated a much more public wedding.

Troy greets the two men cheerfully; Gabriel refuses to answer, until Coggan reminds him that Troy is now master of the farm. Gabriel realizes that he must make the best of this unpleasant situation; he is not comforted, or even hopeful, when Coggan suggests that perhaps Bathsheba is not at home, and they have been wrong about the marriage. Troy delays them as he comments on the changes he will make and on his plans for modernization.

The two men are surprised to hear Troy ask Coggan if there has been any history of insanity in Boldwood's family. Coggan has heard some rumors, but he is not certain. Troy dismisses the idea lightly and tosses them a coin to drink his health, but Gabriel refuses it.

Coggan again warns Gabriel not to allow his feelings about Troy to become too obvious. He thinks that Troy will soon buy his discharge from the army and take over the farm. Gabriel replies that if his place on the farm requires flattering Troy, he would rather leave the farm.

As they walk along, Boldwood appears on his horse, and the two move back to let him pass. Gabriel wonders what Troy meant by his question about Boldwood; his own grief is forgotten in seeing the effect of the news upon that once reserved gentleman. His terrible suffering is obvious in his painfully controlled movements, as he rides towards his home.

COMMENT: The episodes in this chapter seem to echo those

of the preceding one. The Boldwood-Troy confrontation is replaced by a meeting between Troy and Gabriel. Troy seems to be triumphant in both chapters and over both rivals. Of course, Gabriel's calm, philosophical acceptance is sharply contrasted with Boldwood's wild behavior. No bargaining takes place in this chapter, to be sure; but the echo of Troy's tossing Boldwood's money back at him can be heard in Troy's rather arrogant gift of a coin for drinks. Troy's plans for the farm indicate how far from a "natural" or farm-loving man he is; Gabriel accepts the traditional farm life with love and respect.

In addition, Hardy manages to give the reader a small hint about Boldwood's eventual tragedy. He describes Boldwood's actions and manner as half-insane or "deranged"; Troy inquires about madness in Boldwood's family. Slowly, the reader is being prepared for Boldwood's collapse.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WEALTH IN JEOPARDY—THE REVEL

At the end of August, Gabriel stands in the yard where the ricks are stored. His careful observations of the sky and the earth reveal that a terrible storm is on the way. He is concerned as he looks at the eight unprotected ricks which represent the one-half produce of the farm for that year.

It is this night that Troy, now master of the farm, is giving a harvest supper and dance. As Gabriel approaches the barn, he sees the gay decorations and the dancing now in progress. Troy welcomes the choice of the next selection, "The Soldier's Joy," since he has just

received his discharge from the army. When this merry dance is finished, Gabriel sends word to Troy that he would like to speak to him, but Troy refuses to come. Gabriel, who cannot bring himself to walk up to Troy, again sends a message that a heavy rain would ruin the harvest if the ricks were not covered.

Troy ignores the warning and insists that Gabriel is being overanxious. Gabriel starts for home, since he cannot bear watching the scene in the barn. Troy keeps up the celebration and orders a powerful drink of brandy and water for each of the guests. Bathsheba begs him not to give it to the workers, since they are not used to such drinks, and several of the rustics agree, but Troy shrugs off the suggestion and sends the women home so that the men can really enjoy themselves. He threatens to dismiss any man who does not join in the fun.

As Gabriel walks home, he notices signs of the insect and animal life preparing for the storm; the sheep seem terrified and huddle together for protection. Certain that he is right about a bad storm, he returns to the stock yard. He resolves that the crop will not be lost and leave his still beloved Bathsheba penniless. He hurries to the barn to get some help to cover the ricks, but all of the men are sleeping off the effects of the strong drinks, and he must save the ricks alone. He manages to find out where he can get the coverings he needs, but he cannot get the key to the granary (store-house) from Tall. The men are hardly to blame, since they are unused to such drinking and are reduced to this unconscious state in a short time. Gabriel is very worried about the crop and hurries to the village to get the key from Tall's wife. A few minutes later, he begins to drag out four waterproof coverings for two stacks, but there were no more cloths for the three wheat stacks. He decides to slope the sheaves and protect the

openings with wheat from some untied sheaves.

After the wheat was safely secured in this way, he starts on the barley, which must be protected by thatching (covering it with straw, leaves, etc.). The moon disappears and the air becomes very still as he frantically keeps up his work.

COMMENT: It is obvious that Troy is no farmer; he enjoys his power as master of the farm, but cares very little about its practical managing. Since he is so close to the "natural" world, Gabriel is able to assess the strength of the imminent storm; his double devotion to the farm and Bathsheba gives him the conviction that he is right about the storm and eventually helps to save the crops.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE STORM—THE TWO TOGETHER

Lightning and thunder begin as Gabriel continues and he notices that a candle has been lighted in Bathsheba's window. From his position on top of a stack, Gabriel can see the effect of the lightning on the countryside, and realizes that he is not safe there. He decides to climb down, but since the rain has not yet started, he changes his mind and resolves to finish his task. As a precaution, however, he attaches a chain to his rod (which supports the sheaves as he works) to act as a ground. When he starts to work again, he is joined by Bathsheba, who has been disturbed by the coming storm and is worried about the harvest.

She asks for Troy and Gabriel tells her he is asleep in the barn; when

she offers to help, Gabriel tells her to pass up the sheaves to him, if she is not afraid of climbing the ladder in the dark. The lightning continues, getting brighter with each flash, until it is climaxed by a brilliant flare of light (appearing in the form of dancing skeletons of blue fire) and the rick is struck. The two are saved by Gabriel's "lightning rod," but a tree nearby is destroyed. Realizing their narrow escape, Gabriel tells Bathsheba to go down, but she refuses. The worst part of the storm seems to have passed, and Gabriel says that they are lucky to have been spared a heavy rain.

Bathsheba thanks him for his work in saving the grain and wonders why he has had no help. He tries to defend the others, but she realizes what has happened to them. She follows Gabriel to the barn and sees the men all asleep. When she and Gabriel take up their work again, she questions him on his reaction to her marriage. She tells him that she would die if he thought badly of her and explains that her sudden marriage was forced by circumstances. She thought her reputation would be ruined by her meeting Troy at Bath, and when he told her of another beautiful woman he had seen that day, and that if she didn't marry him soon, he could not promise to be faithful, she married him, torn as she was between jealousy and distraction. She tries to defend Troy, but Gabriel does not answer. Gabriel notices that she is getting tired and tells her he can finish alone. She agrees to go if she cannot be of more help, and worries about his safety. He compliments her on her help and she thanks him for his devotion.

Gabriel quietly finishes his task and thinks about her story; he feels that they are closer now than they had ever been while she was still single. He is disturbed by the sound of the turning of the weather vane; the change of wind indicates a heavy rain.

COMMENT: The powerful description of the storm is worthy of comparison with the great bonfire scene in *The Return of the Native*. The effect is just as dramatic, but the linking of the fire with the customs, as well as the fate of the characters, is more technically refined in the later novel. Hardy is still developing this technique, but the reader can still be impressed by the vivid imagery.

The chapter also directs the reader's attention to the development of Bathsheba's relationship with Gabriel; she respects his understanding of the operation of the natural, rural world; his perceptive observations and contact with this world have served her well. Troy's hold on her is weakening, as she obviously depends more and more on Gabriel's judgment; her emotional response to Gabriel is deepening, which can be seen by her feeling the need to explain and defend her marriage to him.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

RAIN—ONE SOLITARY MEETS ANOTHER

At dawn, Gabriel is still at his task. He weights down some of the thatching on the wheat and as the rain starts returns to finish protecting the barley. He is immediately drenched in the downpour and as he works, he remembers that it is on this same spot that he worked to save the stacks from a fire only eight months before. By seven o'clock he is finished; despite his weariness he is satisfied that he saved the crop for the woman he loves. The rustics wake in the barn and start for home; Troy enters the farmhouse, but no one even thinks of the danger of the rain for the harvest.

Gabriel starts home himself and meets Boldwood; Gabriel tells him he looks quite changed, but Boldwood insists that he is perfectly well. Gabriel asks if Boldwood's harvest is safe; he seems distracted, but he finally admits that his own stacks were left uncovered and moreover seems indifferent to their loss. Gabriel realizes how upset Boldwood has been by Bathsheba's marriage; a short time ago it would be unthinkable for Boldwood to appear so bad a farmer. Gabriel tries to console Boldwood but he breaks down and tells Gabriel that he has almost stopped believing in God's mercy. He tries to regain his control as he starts to leave and assures Gabriel that he will soon forget his loss; he asks Gabriel not to mention their meeting and conversation.

COMMENT: Gabriel's familiarity with the ways of nature makes him successful in defying the force of the storm. He does not have to fight nature often; his relationship is based on understanding, and like the oak, he can bend before the wind and not be destroyed.

But Boldwood cannot bend; his spirit is therefore broken by his sense of loss. Gabriel has suffered a disastrous defeat in the loss of his sheep, but is not destroyed by it; he becomes a better man and farmer, despite his loss. Boldwood allows his farm to deteriorate, just as he refuses to be resigned to his fate.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

COMING HOME—A CRY

Since the road between Casterbridge and Weatherbury crosses Yalbury Hill, it is customary for farmers and people in light carriages

to walk up the hill to ease the horse's burden up the slope. One Saturday evening in October, Bathsheba and Troy are returning from the market and make their way up this hill; Bathsheba is in the carriage guiding the horse, and Troy walks beside her.

Bathsheba seems quite depressed, but Troy is gayer than ever; he excuses his losses by blaming the weather, but Bathsheba reminds him that his losses stem from horse-betting. She asks him to promise to stay away from the next races at Budmouth, but Troy refuses and complains that she has disappointed him by her attitude. As they near the top of the hill, they see a woman walking along the road. Troy is just getting ready to climb into the carriage, when the woman asks if he knows the closing time at the Casterbridge Union (a workhouse).

He seems to recognize her voice, but he carefully controls his reaction as he answers her negatively. The woman seems to recognize him and then faints in the road. Troy orders Bathsheba to go on to the top of the hill and says he will take care of the woman. As Bathsheba moves on, Troy gently questions the woman about where she has been and what she is doing at Weatherbury now. She tells him that she has been afraid to write and admits that she has no money. Troy tells her that he cannot help her now; he regrets her having to go to the Union, but he tells her that he will meet her Monday morning and bring her some money. He promises the woman—finally identified as Fanny Robin—that he will take care of her and that he regrets abandoning her.

As she reaches the top of the hill, Bathsheba turns to see Troy hurrying to join her and the woman slowly continuing her way toward Casterbridge. Troy silently takes up the reins and Bathsheba asks if

he knows the woman. Troy admits he does, but not by name, and refuses to explain any further.

COMMENT: The rift between Bathsheba and Troy is rapidly widening; the marriage that is based on such shaky foundations is obviously being slowly destroyed. Their separation is subtly hinted by the picture of Bathsheba riding alone in the carriage, as Troy walks.

The mysterious woman that the two pass on the road is obviously Fanny, as the reader quickly guesses; Hardy is making use of the "veiled woman" technique in hiding her identity for effect. He hints at Fanny's plight after Troy's desertion by having her inquire about the workhouse, the last resort for the poverty-stricken at that time. Troy realizes he must help Fanny, but typically delays meeting her until the postponement becomes the margin between life and death for Fanny.

CHAPTER XL.

ON CASTERBRIDGE HIGHWAY

For some time Fanny continues walking, becoming weaker with each step, until she sinks down by a haystack and falls asleep. When she awakes, night has fallen and she can dimly see the lights of Casterbridge in the distance. She gethers up all her strength to walk the remaining few miles, reminding herself that she is to meet Troy on Monday, but realizes that she might well be in her grave by then.

She hears one o'clock strike as she continues her journey; the light from a passing carriage shows her young face marred by much

suffering. As she passes the two-mile mark, she takes courage in the short distance left, but her ebbing strength causes her to stop to pick up two branches for crutches. With this help, she manages to pass the one-mile mark, but her exhaustion finally causes her to faint. After a few minutes, she pulls herself up, and, with the aid of her sticks, continues bravely on. She painfully creeps onward, counting guideposts to shorten the journey. When she crawls on to the bridge between the highway and Casterbridge, she comforts herself by the thought that she has only a half mile left; but she is too tired to continue.

She lies down on the bridge and tries to think of some way to continue. A large dog comes by and licks her cheek; she struggles up and, leaning on the dog for support, manages to start on her journey again. When she can, she cheerfully urges the dog onward; she carrefully avoids any human help and seems anxious not to be recognized.

Despite her slow progress, she finally reaches the Casterbridge Union. She has just about enough strength left to reach the bell pull before she faints on the door step. By now, it is six o'clock in the morning and some of the people inside are moving about. A man opens the door and helps her in; she asks about the dog outside, but he tells her that he threw stones at it and chased it away. The man walks ahead, carrying a light, while two women support Fanny and take her further into the building.

COMMENT: Fanny's journey to Casterbridge is surely one of the most agonizing miniature odysseys produced in literature. Hardy wrings out every emotional response possible to gain sympathy for Fanny; in fact, her using the dog as a support is

melodramatic and borders on the ridiculous (reminiscent of Liza's jumping over the ice floes in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*). It is ironic that she is helped on her way only by the dog; humanity (especially Troy) seems to have deserted her. Of course, she is accepted at the workhouse, but the callousness of the personnel is evidenced by the man's driving away the dog by throwing stones.

Fanny's obvious desire to keep from being recognized arouses the reader's curiosity; it seems that there is something more than her lack of money that Fanny is hiding from Troy.

CHAPTER XLI.

SUSPICION—FANNY IS SENT FOR

The evening after the meeting with Fanny and most of the next day , is spent silently and painfully by Bathsheba and Troy. Troy finally asks her for twenty pounds, telling her that it is for the races. Bathsheba begs him not to go; Troy refuses to stay at home and insists on the money, admitting he needs it, but not for the races. She promises him some money from her household funds, but she regrets the conflicts that are ruining their marriage. She feels that he is ignoring her, as he would never have in the past.

Troy insists he must go away on the next day, and, taking out his watch, opens the back of the case to stare at the lock of hair which it encloses. Bathsheba accidentally looks up and notices the hair; she is very distressed and cries out, asking whose hair it is. Troy, assuming a casual air, tells her it is hers and that he almost forgot he had it. Bathsheba knows he is lying, since the hair is blond, and again

questions him about it. Troy arouses her jealousy by admitting that it belongs to a pretty young woman, who is still unmarried.

The argument continues until Bathsheba asks Troy to burn the hair, but Troy is too angry to make peace and tells her he regrets their marriage as much as she does. Bathsheba is a bit frightened by his words and insists that she regrets marrying him only if he loves someone else. Troy lets slip that his meeting with the woman on the road reminded him of his past ties. Bathsheba desperately begs him to tell her the truth about the woman and she humbles herself to ask for justice. Her pride is conquered; she laments her infatuation for Troy, since it has brought her unhappiness and humiliation.

When she returns from her customary ride around the farm the next morning, she is told that Troy has left for Casterbridge. She regains some of her poise by the end of breakfast and sets off to walk to another section of the farm. She allows herself to think of Gabriel's devotion and wonders what marriage to him would be like. As she walks along, she sees Boldwood meet with Oak and talk for a few minutes; the two call to Poorgrass, as he is passing by. When Boldwood leaves, she asks Joseph what has happened and he tells her that Fanny Robin died at the Casterbridge Union. He is not certain of the facts about her death, but does tell her that Boldwood plans to send a waggon to bring the body back to Weatherbury for burial.

Bathsheba sincerely pities the girl and, since she was once part of Bathsheba's uncle's household, orders Joseph to prepare a new waggon and to place evergreen and flowers in it to cover Fanny's coffin; she accepts the responsibility for Fanny's burial herself. Joseph tells her that Fanny had been at the Union only a few days; she was supposed to have lived in a garrison-town and then as a seamstress be-

fore her return. Bathsheba immediately realizes that Fanny is the woman she and Troy passed on the road. She nearly faints, but controls herself enough to ask Joseph the color of Fanny's hair; but he does not remember.

About an hour later, Joseph brings the waggon to her for inspection. She is still upset and asks if Joseph has learned anything more about Fanny. He only knows what Boldwood and Gabriel have told him, however, and she sends him on his sad journey.

After he leaves, Bathsheba questions Liddy about Fanny and discovers that she had beautiful blond hair, and that her sweetheart was a soldier in Troy's regiment. Liddy adds that Troy once told her that he knew Fanny's young man very well and that, in fact, they looked very much alike. The report is too much for Bathsheba to bear, and she nervously stops Liddy's gossiping.

> **COMMENT:** The title of the chapter certainly misleads the reader; Fanny is hardly expected to be sent for in this manner. It is the dead Fanny, however, that proves a more successful rival to Bathsheba than Fanny alive could ever have been. Her shadow has been a third party to the marriage from the beginning, but a shadow Bathsheba could defy. It seems ironic that the weak and defenseless Fanny is the one who innocently forces the final wedge into the crack that has been widening in the marriage.
>
> Troy's postponement of help for Fanny has had tragic results; she tragically disappoints him again at this meeting but his realization and remorse is yet to come. Bathsheba's manner in reacting to Fanny's needs is far more charitable than Troy's; she acts

immediately and accepts responsibility for the burial. It is unfortunate that her charity is repaid by the recognition of the depth of Troy's involvement with Fanny.

CHAPTER XLII.

JOSEPH AND HIS BURDEN—BUCK'S HEAD

A wall surrounds the Casterbridge Union, and only an oddly-placed door breaks its surface. The bottom of the door is a few feet off the ground; although it was meant to be used for loading and unloading waggons, the grass growing around it shows it is not often opened. Poorgrass is sent to this door, and a plain coffin is brought out and placed in the waggon by two men. One of them writes on the coffin-lid with some chalk, and then the coffin is covered by a black cloth. Joseph is given a registration certificate; he covers the coffin with the flowers and greens as he has been directed. As he starts back to Weatherbury, he is caught in a dense fog; he regrets his lonesome trip, and, as he approaches Buck's Head Inn, he decides to get a mug of ale to cheer him on his way. Unfortunately for Fanny, and the plan to have her buried by closing time at the Weatherbury churchyard, Poorgrass meets Clark and Coggan, who urge him to keep drinking to make up for being out on such a wretched day.

Although Poorgrass explains his errand, his two friends keep ordering round after round of ale; the longer he stays, the less importance Joseph gives to his task. Gabriel appears, angry at Joseph for his neglect; the two friends try to excuse Joseph, and Gabriel realizes that by now Poorgrass is in no condition to continue. Gabriel leaves and drives the waggon to Weatherbury himself. He meets the parson who tells him that it is now too late for the burial, and since Poor-

grass still has the registration certificate, it would be better to put off the funeral until the next day. He suggests bringing the body to the church for the night; Gabriel agrees that this plan seems best, but the decision must be Bathsheba's.

At first she seems to think that the church would be the best place for the body to remain during the night, but, realizing that the farm is the only home Fanny had known for years, she feels that it would only be charitable to bring the body back to the farm. The parson agrees that Bathsheba is right. The coffin is brought into a little sitting room and placed on two benches. Gabriel remains alone with the coffin for a little while; he is deeply troubled at the outcome of events. In spite of all he has done to spare Bathsheba's feelings, she must suffer the awkwardness of having the body of her rival brought to her own home. He thinks of the agony she will feel at the terrible discovery of Fanny's secret. In a last effort to spare Bathsheba this sad news too soon, he erases the last two words from the chalk inscription on the coffin. The message read "Fanny Robin and child," but now only her name is left on the coffin as Gabriel quietly leaves the house.

COMMENT: Again the cold indifference of institutions is suggested by the callous transferal of Fanny's body to the waggon. In a very efficient manner, responsibility for Fanny is discharged; the damaging inscription is written and the certificate changes hands briskly and without further thought. Even after death, an unhappy fate strikes; the least dependable worker is sent for Fanny who suffers a final indignity as the waggon patiently waits outside Buck's Head Inn.

The climax of the chapter is most effective; Hardy so structures

the developments that the reader's attention is riveted on the coffin and its inscription. Both Fanny's reputation and Bathsheba's peace of mind seem to be saved by Gabriel's kind gesture, but mistakes and their consequences cannot be so easily erased.

CHAPTER XLIII.

FANNY'S REVENGE

Late that evening Liddy talks briefly with Bathsheba and offers to sit up to wait for Troy. Bathsheba sends her to bed and prepares to wait by the one lighted fire. She feels her new loneliness and pain acutely. She wonders what effect this tragedy will have on her marriage; Liddy returns to bring some news of Fanny and whispers it in Bathsheba's ear. Bathsheba insists that only one name is on the coffin lid, but she is so upset by the possibility that Fanny's child is buried with her that sleep is impossible. She is not sophisticated enough to ignore its importance and grows more and more miserable in thinking of Fanny's fate and her own unhappiness. Had Gabriel only realized how much indecision and suspense his simple erasure had caused, he could never have brought himself to cause such agony.

Bathsheba decides to ask Gabriel to tell her what he knows; she hurries out to his cottage, but when she sees him saying his night prayers and putting out his lights, she determines to find out the truth for herself. She returns to the house and frantically searches for a screwdriver; she opens the coffin, and, as she looks at the enclosed bodies, tells herself that it is best to know the worst. She thinks that such an invasion of privacy would have once seemed terrible, but now it seems trivial in comparison to Troy's shameful desertion of Fanny.

She weeps over the two bodies and realizes that Fanny has triumphed over her, by her death. The dead Fanny excites only pity and not jealousy or revenge. She kneels by the opened coffin to pray and rises with a quieted soul. She moves about the coffin and lays flowers around Fanny's head; her distracted actions are interrupted by Troy's return.

Slowly he begins to understand the meaning of the scene, but he does not yet connect Fanny with the corpse. Bathsheba tries to leave but Troy asks her who died and pulls her back to the coffin. The candlelight reveals the dead mother and child; Troy is shocked by the full realization of Fanny's plight. Bathsheba asks if he knows the girl and he admits it; she has never suffered as she does now, watching his reaction to the sight before him. He bends over and kisses Fanny; Bathsheba cannot bear the pain and begs him not to kiss Fanny and her child, but if he must, to kiss her too, since she loves him more than Fanny ever did.

Troy looks at her as if he does not recognize her; he pushes her away and finally tells her that he has been wicked and that Fanny is his victim. He cruelly insists that he has loved Fanny and that she has meant more to him than any one else ever can. He had only become infatuated with Bathsheba and he should have married Fanny; the crowning blow is his statement that in the sight of heaven Fanny is his true wife. He is not morally Bathsheba's, despite their marriage; Bathsheba feels a wild impulse to run from him and hide. She rushes out of the door into the dark.

COMMENT: Although the reader is tempted to forgive Troy by virtue of his search for Fanny and the realization that he does not know about the child until now, Troy's cruel treatment

of Bathsheba, his recognition of Fanny on the road and his postponement of immediate aid, and most especially, his refusal to marry Fanny earlier, simply because she embarrassed him when she failed to meet him at the church, make such forgiveness impossible.

Boldwood's curse has finally touched Troy; at no other point in the story is Troy as miserable and unhappy. He misses the last opportunity to re-establish his relationship with Bathsheba when he coldly ignores her as he finally identifies himself with Fanny. Just as he once treated Fanny indifferently, he fails to sympathize with the effect that this development has on Bathsheba. He can help Bathsheba; Fanny is beyond needing his help. It is perhaps Troy's fatal flaw that he is always too late—or in the wrong place—to understand or to help anyone.

CHAPTER XLIV.

UNDER A TREE—REACTION

Bathsheba runs out along the dark road until she finds a fern-covered shelter and falls down there to sleep at last. She is awakened by the early morning sounds: birds chirping and a singing ploughboy walking to work. She watches the sunrise and stares at the beauty of the dawn on the land around her. She is amused at hearing a schoolboy reciting his lesson as he passes, and suddenly she sees Liddy, who has come out to search for her. Liddy reports that Troy has left early that morning and Fanny's body has not yet been taken away for burial.

Bathsheba decides not to return just yet; Liddy brings her a small

breakfast and a warm wrap. Since Fanny's body is still at the house, the two stroll about the woods until Liddy is sent back to see if Bathsheba can return. Liddy tells the workers that Bathsheba is in her room and is not to be disturbed.

Bathsheba decides to remain and accept her troubles; she refuses to tell Liddy what dreadful tragedy has torn her marriage apart. They return to the house and Bathsheba hides in an unused attic. She passes the day reading light literature, but the precaution of hiding from Troy is not necessary for he does not return all day. As the sun begins to set, Bathsheba watches the village boys playing, but the game ends abruptly. The next time Liddy comes up to the room, Bathsheba inquires about the sudden finish; Liddy tells her that a carved tombstone has just arrived from Casterbridge and the boys probably went to see whose it was. Liddy adds that she knows nothing more about it.

COMMENT: The night of betrayal gives way to a dawn of serenity. Bathsheba wakes to the dawn of a new day, and the dawn of a new maturity. But this maturity is only incipient as she reverts to the childish act of hiding in the attic to avoid facing Troy.

Again Hardy piques the reader's curiosity when he introduces the tombstone at the end of the chapter. The reader can guess it is for Fanny, but we must wait for the next chapter to discover who ordered it and how the monument arrived at Weatherbury so quickly after Fanny's burial.

CHAPTER XLV.

TROY'S ROMANTICISM

After Bathsheba leaves the house, Troy covers the dead bodies and then goes upstairs to wait for morning. He waited for Fanny at the appointed place and grew angry as she disappointed him for the second time. He rode off to the races at Budmouth, but he couldn't bring himself to bet any money. He stayed until about nine o'clock and then rode home slowly; he began to realize that perhaps illness had detained Fanny and regretted not asking about her at Casterbridge. On his return, he made his tragic discovery.

As soon as it starts to get light, Troy leaves the house without a thought about Bathsheba. He locates Fanny's newly dug grave in the churchyard and then hurries to Casterbridge. He finds a stone mason and orders an elaborate tombstone; he places his order as simply as a child might. He asks for the best possible memorial he can get for twenty-seven pounds, all the money he has (that was to be Fanny's). He writes out the inscription he wants placed on the stone, waits in town until the stone is ready, and watches it placed in a cart for transport to Weatherbury.

Carrying a heavy basket on his arm, he leaves Casterbridge when it is dark. He meets the cart returning from Weatherbury and is satisfied to hear that the tombstone has been erected. Although it is now about ten o'clock, he searches for Fanny's grave in the dark, gets a spade and lantern, and, by its light, plants the flowers he has brought in his basket. Carefully, he lays out the plants and arranges them with attention. He does not feel foolish at his romantic action, but

works through the dark night until it begins to rain. Since he is tired and the rain seems to get heavier, he decides to finish the work in the morning and falls asleep on a bench placed in the porch of the church.

COMMENT: Hardy's grim humor is evident in Troy's use of the money he planned to give Fanny to buy her an elaborate tombstone. It is additionally ironic that the man who denied Fanny in life should so dramatically accept identification with her after her death. The gesture of his ordering a large marble stone recalls the impulsive gift of the valuable watch to Bathsheba. Even in repentance, Troy must be melodramatic. However genuine Troy's grief and self-recrimination, the reader is always aware that these tender gestures to Fanny are too late; Troy's planting of the flowers suggests a romantic and impractical nature, but it cannot excuse his earlier desertion of Fanny and his cruel rejection of Bathsheba.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE GURGOYLE: ITS DOINGS

Fanny's grave is in the churchyard of Weatherbury Church, erected in the fourteenth century, square in shape, and ornamented by two stone gargoyles (gurgoyles) on each of the corners of the square. These gargoyles were built not only for ornament, but to allow the rain to run off the lead roof. Water gushes through the wide-open mouths of the sometimes hideous faces of the gargoyles; each one was carved differently from the other, a lack of symmetry associated with the Gothic art of the continent. The passing of time and the decision of the churchwardens have put all but two of these water-spouts out

of use.

While Troy sleeps, the rain keeps on; soon water begins falling from one of the two functionary gargoyles. The heavy rain causes a small stream to pour from the wall and over towards Fanny's grave. The stones that were arranged to protect the soil from such a deluge are dislodged by the force of the falling water. Since the corner in which Fanny's grave is located is not very often used, or visited, no one is aware of the danger to the graves from the rain.

The pouring water rushes into the loose soil of Fanny's grave and soon a pool of water is formed. The flowers that Troy so carefully planted are loosened and destroyed; some plants actually float away.

Troy's two rather sleepless nights cause him to sleep until broad daylight; he awakes to find the landscape presenting a bright new prospect. As he walks towards Fanny's grave, he notices that the path is covered with mud and sees some of the flowers he planted moved quite a distance by the flood. The water has hollowed the earth over the grave; the displaced earth has become mud that spots even the new tombstone. Nearly all of the flowers are washed away.

The sight upsets Troy more than ever; the flooding seems to be the last blow of Fate. It seems to climax the tragedy he discovered so shortly before, and it is more than he can bear. For the first time in his life, Troy hates himself; he is thoroughly miserable and feels himself especially marked for disaster. He leaves the grave, not even bothering to fill the hollow or to re-arrange the flowers; he seems to give up decisive action completely, and leaves the village.

Bathsheba has noticed the lantern light in the churchyard from her

attic window. At dawn, she opens the window to the fresh new day; Liddy brings her some breakfast and tells her that Gabriel has gone to investigate the strange noise coming from one of the spouts on the church roof. Bathsheba asks if there is any news of Troy; Liddy tells her that he has been seen on the road to Budmouth.

Bathsheba walks to the churchyard and locates the ruined grave; she and Gabriel stare at the elaborate stone. She sadly reads the inscription, "Erected by Francis Troy in Beloved Memory of Fanny Robin."

She directs Gabriel to fill in the hollow of the grave while she collects the displaced flowers and re-plants them. She asks Gabriel to get the churchwardens to turn the leadwork at the mouth of the spout to prevent another such flooding. Her suffering has refined her instinctive reactions; very charitably, she wipes the mudstains from the stone, as if she really appreciated the sentiment expressed by the inscription.

COMMENT: Fortune seems totally against Troy at this point; everything he touches is ruined. His last attempt to repair his injury to Fanny is thwarted by a natural force, rain. Troy has never been as conscious of nature as Gabriel is, and is hardly sympathetic to the "natural" world, which seems to be paying him back for his neglect. The flowers he plants are washed away; he abandons them, and Weatherbury.

Troy has learned little from his suffering and he acts childishly in simply leaving his troubles behind as he leaves town. He coldly abandons Bathsheba to face the embarrassment of the inscription on the stone; her charity and serene acceptance of

suffering is disclosed by her cleaning the tombstone and re-arranging the flowers.

CHAPTER XLVII.

ADVENTURES BY THE SHORE

Troy, terribly distracted by the sad events of the past few days and reluctant to return home to Bathsheba, wanders along the road to the south. By the middle of the afternoon, he finds himself near a slope that runs to the top of a group of hills which separate the valley of cultivated land from the coast. As he nears the top of this road, he sees the broad sea before him, and, on his right, the town of Budmouth. The area seems totally deserted; nothing seems to move except the lapping waves at the sea shore. He discovers a small cover and decides to rest here and take a swim before walking on. The cove is surrounded by cliffs, except for one section which opens out to the sea; Troy leaves his clothes at the water's edge and swims out to sea. As he swims, he recalls hearing that in this area many swimmers have been drowned because of the current. No boat is in sight as Troy desperately tries to get back to the cove; he swims on, trying to conserve his strength. As he moves further towards the right, he sees a ship's boat and swims toward it. The sailors hear his shouts and row in his direction; a few minutes later, Troy is pulled into the boat. The sailors have come ashore for sand; they lend him what clothes they can and agree to put him ashore in the morning. As it grows dark, they row quickly to their ship. The only sound to be heard is that of their oars; the only sight, for miles, is that of the ship toward which they move.

COMMENT: Troy's amazing luck has not completely deserted

him. His rescue may seem badly contrived, but Troy's mysterious disappearance and the expectation of his return later on in the story, helps to maintain the reader's interest.

The device used in introducing the sailors as Troy's saviors is termed *deus ex machina* . A force totally out of the story intervenes to save him; the sailors and ship appear only when they are needed and are out of the main thread of the story: for it would be difficult to explain why some familiar character should keep Troy's rescue a secret. Hardy was thus forced to fall back on this contrivance to remove Troy temporarily from the scene, but yet to keep the expectation of his return very much alive.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

DOUBTS ARISE—DOUBTS LINGER

Bathsheba accepts her husband's absence with surprise and some relief; she seems indifferent about his return. The newly humbled young woman weighs the outcome of his return; she might have to leave Weatherbury Farm. She knows that if she (or Troy) fails to pay the rent due in January, very little consideration would be given her (since there had been some objection to her inheriting the farm) and she would again be reduced to poverty. She feels sure that her marriage has been a mistake; calmly she awaits the outcome.

The first Saturday after Troy's disappearance, she goes to Casterbridge to the market; she notices a man who has been looking for her and hears him speak to someone nearby. He asks for Mrs. Troy and is told that she is standing close to them; Bathsheba's sensitive hearing catches the rest of the news: Troy has been drowned.

She is shocked by the news and cannot believe it; her self-command gives way and she faints. Boldwood catches her in his arms and asks what the news is. He is told that Troy was drowned near Lulwind Cove; Troy's clothes were found and brought into Budmouth the day before. Boldwood carries Bathsheba to a private room to give her time to recover; she regains consciousness and asks to return home.

Boldwood leaves the room delighted that for a few minutes Bathsheba had been in his arms; he sends a woman in to take care of her and goes out to see if he can find out more about the disaster. Boldwood offers to get someone to drive Bathsheba home, or to drive her home himself, but she refuses and, when she feels a bit more controlled, starts to drive home alone. When she returns, she goes upstairs at once; the news has already reached Weatherbury, but no one disturbs her as she goes up to her room and sits quietly by the window until quite dark. To Liddy's question if she would like to order some mourning clothes, Bathsheba says no, for she is sure Troy is still alive. She remains firm in this conviction until the evidence gathered during the next few days seems to confirm his death, even though the body has not been found.

When Troy's clothes are returned, she realizes that he planned to come back to shore and dress again; nothing but death would have prevented him from returning. She wonders if Troy had been so distressed by Fanny's death that he schemed to make a suicide look like an accident, but she is not blind to the possibility that Troy's death might mean something worse, such as a rejection of her. Late that evening, she examines the lock of hair still enclosed in Troy's watch; she realizes that the two belonged together in life, and perhaps they are together again in death. At first she thinks she should burn the hair, but finally decides to keep it, in memory of Fanny.

COMMENT: Troy's impulsive action has again caused pain that he never considered would result; he thinks only of himself and his own troubles, coldly ignoring the effect his disappearance will have on Bathsheba and her obvious need for him at this time.

Bathsheba, on the other hand, has developed far from the thoughtless girl first introduced to the reader; her concern for others is obvious in her reaction to the news of Troy, and her acceptance of his bond with Fanny.

CHAPTER XLIX.

OAK'S ADVANCEMENT—A GREAT HOPE

As autumn starts to give way to winter, Bathsheba is living quietly, if not peacefully, regretting her past mistakes. She manages the farm without too much interest; Gabriel, however, is finally appointed bailiff officially, although he served in that capacity for a long time without the title.

Boldwood's farm is far from prosperous; he lives alone and is so preoccupied with his troubles that he neglects his crops. Repeatedly his workers remind him of his duties, but he ignores the warning until the farm is ruined. He sends for Gabriel finally and asks him to become supervisor of the farm without abandoning his duties at Bathsheba's farm. Gabriel's fortune, at least, seems to be getting better; Bathsheba first objects to Gabriel's double chores, but finally agrees, since the farms are situated next to each other.

Gabriel's prosperity is noted by the villagers; Susan Tall, for one,

comments on his improved appearance. His agreement with Boldwood, which allows him a share of the profits instead of a fixed wage, makes Gabriel modestly well off financially; since he continues to live as simply as before, some villagers consider him miserly, but Gabriel is only holding on to old habits.

Boldwood, still determined to win Bathsheba despite all his past unhappiness, is seized by the great hope that she will agree to marry him at last. She is no longer the vain young woman who toyed with his love; in fact, her troubles seem to have made her beauty and charm more desirable than ever.

When Bathsheba returns from a two months' visit to her aunt at Norcombe, Boldwood takes the opportunity to ask Liddy about her. He flatters the girl about her close connection with Bathsheba and Liddy confides that if Bathsheba should marry again they would still remain together. Boldwood grasps the slight hope this hint seems to offer and asks about Bathsheba's plans for marriage. Liddy insists that Bathsheba never talks of marriage, but that she once said she might marry at the end of seven years (the legal period necessary to declare Troy dead). Boldwood insists that no such waiting period is necessary; Liddy asks if he has discussed the matter with some lawyers. He denies this and hurries away; he is quite angry with himself for appearing so foolish and underhanded, but at least he has found out something of value. Six more years is indeed a long time, but his eventual reward is worth it. He will patiently wait out that time, and prove how little the delay will affect his devotion.

Meanwhile, that summer the Greenhill Fair is held, which is frequently attended by the people of Weatherbury.

COMMENT: Boldwood, unlike Gabriel, has not learned to accept his fate philosophically; he continues to yearn for Bathsheba, despite all his previous disappointments. This insistence on winning Bathsheba has become almost a mad obsession, and it will destroy him if he cannot learn to control it.

Gabriel, on the other hand, remains patient and tolerant; he still is devoted to Bathsheba, but he has learned to live with his pain. He has never acted contrary to nature. He has suffered most of his trials through no fault of his own, and now seems to be rewarded by good fortune.

CHAPTER L.

THE SHEEP FAIR—TROY TOUCHES HIS WIFE'S HAND

The Greenhill Fair, visited by people from all of South Wessex, is extremely popular. The busiest day of the fair is that of the sheep sales; the sheep are penned on the top of a hill which is surrounded by the ruins of an ancient earthwork (a man-built mound). Shepherds bring their flocks from distances, travelling ten or twelve miles a day and resting for the night in hired fields by the side of the road. Special provisions are made for sheep that become lame, or simply worn out, and for lambs that were born during the trip. Weatherbury Farms are not too far from the fair, but Gabriel has to supervise both flocks; the large united flock need the additional attention of Boldwood's shepherd, Cainy, and George, Gabriel's old dog.

At another section of the hill, a large tent is erected and a special theatrical performance is announced, "The Royal Hippodrome

Performance of Turpin's Ride to York and the Death of Black Bess." As the flocks are sold and owners and shepherds shed their responsibilities, many of them make their way to this tent. Squeezed in among the crowd waiting for admission are Coggan and Poorgrass, who are at the fair for a holiday. The two finally enter the tent, which has a section reserved in the rear for dressing rooms. In the area set apart for the male performers, a young man sits on the grass pulling on boots; he is recognized as Sergeant Troy.

Troy's history since his disappearance from Weatherbury is summarized. Because the ship to which Troy's rescuers were rowing was short of crew members, Troy signed on as a seaman, but when his clothes were sent for their loss was discovered. He worked his passage to the United States and made a scanty living giving lessons in gymnastics (including sword handling, fencing and boxing). When tired of this life, he decided to return to England and claim a more secure life at Weatherbury Farm. He wondered if Bathsheba considered him as living or as dead; in any case, he determined to regain his former position. By the time he reached Liverpool, however, he began to worry about his reception and Bathsheba's attitude toward him. In addition, he thought that she might well have lost the farm by now and then he would be responsible for taking care of her; this prospect, especially with the memory of Fanny haunting them both, made the thought of his quick return home rather unpleasant. He delayed his return trip and took any type of work he could find; finally, he joined a travelling circus and, by using his skill as a marksman, became a member of the troupe. His talents were recognized and the play about Turpin was prepared largely for him to display his talents as the hero. Troy thought of this position as only temporary, and since he was indifferent to where the company performed, found himself at Greenhill, not far from Weatherbury.

As the sun begins to set and the time of the performance approaches, Bathsheba arrives at the tent; she is as curious as anyone about the performance, and is eager to see it. She meets Boldwood, who asks if her sheep had sold for a good price. She tells him that the sheep were sold as soon as they reached the fair, and she has some spare time. She still has one dealer to see and is passing the time away before her appointment by watching the play. She asks if Boldwood knows anything about Turpin; Boldwood admits that he knows little about him, except that one of Coggan's relations is supposed to know a friend of Turpin's.

The performance begins and Boldwood apologizes for keeping her and offers to get her ticket. When he sees Bathsheba's hesitation, he quickly adds that he is on his way home; Bathsheba is eager to see the play, and, since Gabriel is nowhere around, asks Boldwood to act in his place and find a seat for her. He arranges for her seat and leaves; unfortunately, the seat he selected is conspicuous (no one else is in the "reserved" section) and Bathsheba becomes the object of everyone's attention until the play begins. She tries to make the best of the situation and, as she looks over the crowd, is glad to see Coggan and Poorgrass among the spectators.

In this golden haze of the late afternoon sun, Troy peeps from behind the scenes and sees Bathsheba. Although his disguise for the performance would hide his face, he is afraid she will recognize his voice. He debates about going through with his performance; his indifference to his reception at Weatherbury has changed, partly by his shame at her finding him in so low an occupation, and partly because she has never appeared so beautiful. Troy's wits are sharpened by challenges such as this; he immediately tells the manager that a creditor who might recognize him is present and asks if his part might be

played silently. The manager agrees and adds that the spectators would probably not realize that Troy's speeches have been omitted, since much of the play's impact depended on action and not dialogue. The audience is very pleased by the performance; Poorgrass and Coggan are very impressed, and Poorgrass is especially thrilled when he joins the volunteers to carry out Bess at the end of the play—an experience he can describe with pride for years to come.

Troy has taken extra pains with his make-up and managed to get through the performance undetected. During the next performance, however, his luck runs out: he is recognized by Pennyways (the dismissed bailiff who has become Bathsheba's enemy). Troy decides to ignore him, but he starts to worry about the news of his return being spread about Weatherbury. He is anxious to find out about Bathsheba's financial situation before he makes his identity known, so Pennyways must be silenced.

As it gets dark, Troy dons a false beard and searches for Pennyways at the largest refreshment booth at the fair. This booth has been comfortably arranged with a first and second class section, and as fully equipped as any local inn. As Troy enters, he cannot find Pennyways, but sees Bathsheba at the further end seated near the canvas wall of the tent. He hurries around the outside of the tent to where Bathsheba is seated with Boldwood; he hears her voice and quietly cuts the canvas so he can see them as well as overhear her conversation. Bathsheba explains that the buyer she is waiting for has not kept his appointment. Pennyways appears and tells her he has some private information for her. She refuses to listen to him and Pennyways writes this message: "Your husband is here. I've seen him. Who's the fool now?" He folds up the note and, when she will not accept it, tosses it into her lap and leaves.

Although Troy can not see what was written, he guesses that it refers to him; he curses his luck as Boldwood picks up the note to hand it to Bathsheba. Bathsheba transfers the note from her right to her left hand (the hand nearest Troy); he reaches under the tent-cloth and, with lightning speed, snatches the note and runs away. He hurries back to the front of the tent to find Pennyways and hears some men talking about the daring attempt to rob a young lady; he then discovers Pennyways standing behind some dancers, and draws him away from the tent with a few whispered words.

COMMENT: The chapter contains several rapidly developing events. The plot is complicated by the discovery of Troy's return; he controls the outcome of the story from this point on.

Troy's unpleasant traits are at their most obvious in this chapter. He fails to be concerned with Bathsheba's financial and emotional state; he allows her to suffer by not relieving her mind about his safety. His reasons for returning are basically selfish; first he considers his own security by planning to resume his control of the farm, and then he is drawn to Bathsheba because of her charm and beauty that is legally his, by right of their marriage. Considering his state of mind after Fanny's death, his callousness might be forgiven, but one can hardly forgive his hiding his identity until he is sure that Bathsheba still owns a prosperous farm.

CHAPTER LI.

BATHSHEBA TALKS WITH HER OUTRIDER

Since Poorgrass' visit to the refreshment booth makes it impossible

for him to drive Bathsheba back to the farm, and Gabriel must still arrange for the sale of Boldwood's remaining flocks, Bathsheba decides to accept Boldwood's offer to escort her home. She would have preferred Gabriel, but the "robbery" at the tent has frightened her enough to be glad of even Boldwood's company. Furthermore, she feels that it would be unkind to refuse Boldwood, whose devotion is still quite evident.

Boldwood rides his horse close to her carriage; they chatter about the fair and farming, until Boldwood abruptly asks Bathsheba if she would remarry someday. She is confused by the suddenness of the question, and manages to reply that she has not thought seriously about it and that her husband's death has never been absolutely proved.

Boldwood tells her that he regrets having lost her and asks how she feels now about him; he urges her to marry him and repair the injury caused to him, if evidence is found that Troy is really dead. She refuses to discuss the possibility, since any remarriage would have to wait until the legal period for declaring Troy dead is over. Boldwood pleads with her to accept him; Bathsheba finally agrees that on Christmas she will promise to marry him at the end of the seven years, if Troy does not return.

COMMENT: Bathsheba promises Boldwood what he so earnestly desires out of compassion and a sense of justice. She realizes that her foolish joke has caused him much anguish, and it is only fair that she pay the penalty for her "crime" by marrying him, even if she does not love him. Bathsheba has been so unhappy in her marriage to Troy that she feels happiness does not exist for her and that she may as well make Boldwood hap-

py in payment for his long devotion and many troubles.

CHAPTER LII.

CONVINCING COURSES

This chapter is divided into separate sections.

(1)

At Little Weatherbury Farm, Boldwood prepares an elaborate Christmas party, much to the surprise of his neighbors. The preparations indicate that the party will be especially merry; the house is well decorated for Christmas, and the kitchen fire continues all day long to provide enough food. Floor space for dancing is cleared and two men bring a large log for the fire to warm the guests in the long hall. Something seems to be missing, however, for the host (a usually lonely man not given much to entertaining) leaves the organization of the party to others, and the invited guests feel that a party at this home seems almost unnatural.

(2)

Bathsheba dresses for the dance and tells Liddy that she's sorry she has to attend, since she promised to see Boldwood "on business" at Christmastime. She is nervous and upset because she realizes that she is probably the *cause* of the party; in frustration she wishes she had never seen Weatherbury. She insists on wearing her black mourning clothes in order to appear as usual and to reflect her reluctance to attend the party.

Bathsheba feels that a stronger will than hers has forced her into her promise and to make her feel that she must promise to marry

Boldwood. As Christmas nears, she grows more and more anxious and puzzled about her predicament. One day she meets Gabriel accidentally and tells him about her trouble; Oak reminds her that Boldwood will never forget her. Bathsheba agrees and tells him that she feels that if she did not make this promise Boldwood would go mad. His whole life and well-being seem to depend on her.

Gabriel tells her that the marriage would not be wrong, but he adds that he thinks it sinful of her to marry Boldwood without loving him. Bathsheba, however, tells him that she must pay the price for her cruel joke; she accepts the responsibility and views the marriage as a sort of penance. She refuses to accept any outsider's opinion on love, although she might accept it on other matters, and leaves Gabriel.

She has spoken frankly to Gabriel and does not expect him to react in any other way than the way he does; yet, she feels a bit disappointed that Gabriel does not wish her to marry him. While she does not consider marriage to Gabriel a possibility, she still wishes that he might have mentioned his love for her and is a bit annoyed that he offered his advice so dispassionately.

(3)

At Weatherbury Farm, Boldwood dresses himself more carefully than he has ever done in his life. A tailor from Casterbridge has come to help him try on a new coat, and never has Boldwood been so difficult to please. When he finally seems satisfied, Gabriel comes in to report on the day's progress and Boldwood tells him to make merry that night. He confides his great hope to Gabriel and tells him he worries that something might yet happen to take this joy away. He asks Gabriel's advice on trivial things such as the knot in his tie, and then

he questions Gabriel about depending on women to keep their promises.

Gabriel comforts him by replying that a woman may keep a promise if it will repair an injury. Boldwood tells him that he has not yet won an absolute promise, but he is sure that she will agree to an engagement that very night. When Gabriel reminds him that the marriage must wait seven years, Boldwood impatiently counts off the time has already passed since Troy's disappearance; he must wait only five years, nine months, and a few days. Gently, Gabriel points out that Bathsheba is still young and Boldwood may depend too much on promises, but Boldwood refuses to believe he could be so terribly disappointed as he was before. He is certain that if Bathsheba promises to marry him, she will keep her word.

(4)

Troy meets Pennyways at the White Hart Tavern; Pennyways has not been able to see a lawyer about the legal aspects of Troy's return. Troy feels he is innocent of any law-breaking, but the ex-bailiff points out that his deception has made him a vagabond and that he could be punished for desertion. Although Troy laughs at the possibility, he is still a bit worried; he asks about the connection between Bathsheba and Boldwood, but Pennyways has not been able to find out much, except that Boldwood is giving a party and that Bathsheba will attend. Gossip about the two can only report that she has not seen Boldwood since the fair and seems quite cold towards him.

Troy describes her to Pennyways as a splendid woman and tells him that he is glad he will soon make himself known to her. He asks Pennyways how she looked when he went by the farm; Pennyways

reports that she looked at him as if he didn't exist and continued her supervision of the making of cider. When Pennyways tells him that Oak now manages both farms, Troy says that Gabriel probably finds it hard to manage Bathsheba. Pennyways does not agree, since Bathsheba depends so much on Gabriel, who still remains independent himself. Troy tells him that if Pennyways will help him, he, in turn, would help Pennyways make his peace with Bathsheba. By this time, Troy is ready for his work that evening.

(5)

Bathsheba is still reluctant to leave for the party and wishes that she did not look so well. Liddy tells her she looks as attractive as she did over a year ago when she so strongly defended Troy; she points out that Bathsheba's nervousness about the party heightens her beauty. She asks what Bathsheba would do if Boldwood should ask her to elope, and Bathsheba reminds her that she cannot marry for years and tells her that, if she does finally, it will be for reasons other than might be guessed. With this reply, she leaves for the party.

(6)

Boldwood tells Gabriel that his share in the farm is too small for all the work he does; his plan is to retire from managing the farm and eventually allow Gabriel to take over the full management. His hopes for Bathsheba make the world seem brighter to him, and he wants to share his happiness with Gabriel. Gabriel warns him not to plan too far ahead, since he has been sadly disappointed before. Boldwood admits that Gabriel is right, but he realizes that Gabriel's devotion to Bathsheba is more than just that of an employee and he would like to show his friendship and respect to his unsuccessful rival. Gabriel assures him that he can endure the pain as he leaves the feverishly excited Boldwood. Gabriel worries about the emotions that have made

Boldwood so totally unlike his former self.

Boldwood remains in his room in a mood now rather solemn; he takes out a small box and opens it to look at a woman's ring set with diamonds. He stares at the obviously new ring for some time, when the sound of arriving carriages causes him to close the box and put it carefully away in his pocket. He is disappointed to find that Bathsheba has not yet arrived; although his reserved expression hides his feelings about her, he is obviously quite excited about something other than the party, as he greets his guests.

(7)

As he pulls on a heavy overcoat with a cape and huge collar which reaches to a cap pulled down over his ears, Troy asks Pennyways if he can be recognized. Pennyways approves the "disguise" and asks Troy why he will not write Bathsheba; in fact, he feels Troy is better off without a wife to worry about. Troy replies angrily that he is missing out on Bathsheba's obvious prosperity; since he saw her at the fair he has decided to return to her and would have by now had not Pennyways cautioned him about legal problems. It is too late to draw back now, since he has been seen about the village and recognized. He is angry at himself for running away, but he enjoys the thought of the dramatic impact his entry at the party will have, but then a sudden premonition of death strikes him.

Pennyways realizes that Troy's reconciliation with Bathsheba will mean a change of fortune for him, for better or for worse, so he begins to soften his comments about Bathsheba and agrees to do what Troy asks of him. Troy takes his leave and plans to arrive at Boldwood's party shortly before nine o'clock.

COMMENT: Hardy makes use of an interesting technique in this chapter, that of joining together seven small chapters to form the one larger one. This method offers the reader the opportunity to see developments progressing at three locations with Boldwood, Troy, and Bathsheba. In addition, Hardy can maintain suspense by moving from one character to another. The chapter ends precisely at the most exciting moment; the reader has been keyed to an excited pitch by the preparations for the party made by the three separate characters, and Hardy makes us eager to read on to discover the outcome of these preparations.

CHAPTER LIII.

CONCURRITUR—HORAE MOMENTO

As the guests enter Boldwood's home, the light from the opening and closing of the door shines on a group of men discussing Troy's return. The gossipers agree that Bathsheba knows nothing about his reappearance and wonder if Troy means to avoid her or to do her some harm. One man seems to sympathize with Bathsheba, while another thinks her a fool for becoming involved with a man like Troy. As Jacob Smallbury approaches, the speakers are revealed as some of Boldwood's workers. Laban Tall joins them and asks them to keep quiet about Troy's return, since the report will hurt Bathsheba, no matter it is true or not. He insists that she has always been fair to him, despite the comments of men like Henery.

As the workers stand silently considering their own thoughts, Boldwood opens the door and comes down the path. They remain quiet as one of them points out that Boldwood might feel insulted

that they have not come into the party sooner. They are unwilling eavesdroppers as Boldwood cries out his hopes for Bathsheba and of his torment at her keeping him in suspense. The men regret having overheard these private feelings and pity Boldwood, especially now that Troy has returned. Troy seems to have brought more trouble with him; the joy of the evening seems lost for the workers and they agree to go to Warren's Malthouse before returning to Boldwood's.

As they approach, they discover Troy peering in the window, obviously intent on the conversation between Oak and the malster. The old man, gossiping about Boldwood's party, sees it as all being in Bathsheba's honor and comments that Boldwood is a fool to act this way for a woman who does not care for him. The men hurry back to the party; Tall is chosen to tell Bathsheba the news about Troy, but he cannot bring himself to spoil the party.

Bathsheba is still young enough to enjoy the party, but the conditions under which it is given tend to ruin it for her. She has decided to stay for only an hour and begins to take her leave when the time is up. Boldwood begs her to give him her promise to marry him at the end of the legal waiting period. When he agrees not to bring any pressure upon her during this time, she makes the long-awaited promise. He asks her to accept his ring, but she refuses, since she wants to keep the engagement a secret. He insists that she wear it only for the evening; she bends before his stronger will. Bathsheba stops near the bottom of the stairs to take a last look at the festivities before she leaves, but the guests seem to have broken up into small groups to discuss the news. Boldwood gaily inquires what has happened; the men are reluctant to tell him. Just as Laban is sent to tell Bathsheba, a stranger asking for Mrs. Troy is announced. Boldwood sends word for the stranger to join the party; as Troy enters, he is

recognized by those who know of his return. Bathsheba is shocked; she can only stand and stare at the newcomer. Since he still does not recognize him, Boldwood cheerfully welcomes him; but then Troy is identified by his harsh laugh.

Troy turns to Bathsheba and orders her to come home with him. She is either too terrified or too surprised to move; a voice, hardly recognizable as Boldwood's, tells her to go with her husband. When Troy reaches out to pull her to him, she shrinks back. Her scream at his touch is followed by the sound of a gunshot; Boldwood, looking like a madman, has fired at Troy and killed him. His attempt to kill himself is stopped by his workers. Boldwood crosses to Bathsheba, kisses her hand and then walks out into the darkness, before anyone can even think of stopping him.

COMMENT: This chapter might also serve as the climax of the book, since the action from this point on is "falling action," and the height of excitement and pitch of intensity is reached at this point. Boldwood is the director of the events Troy's return sets in motion; having carried out his part in Bathsheba's story, he removes himself from the action.

Hardy has set the scene for the acceptance of Boldwood's role as murderer very carefully. He throws out several hints of Boldwood's growing lack of mental stability; he often repeats that Boldwood is a much changed man; indeed, Bathsheba fears he will lose his mind if she doesn't accept him, and Troy had inquired of Coggan about a history of insanity in Boldwood's family. This development towards Troy's murder is a perfect example of Hardy's craftsmanship in putting the plot together; details which seem unimportant at the time are suddenly seen as

threads which lead to a later important event. There is very little in the way of action that is wasted in this novel.

CHAPTER LIV.

AFTER THE SHOCK

Deliberately, and with firm, even steps, Boldwood walks to Casterbridge and surrenders himself at the jail. The news of disaster spreads quickly; Gabriel arrives a few minutes after Boldwood's departure to find the guests bewildered and terrified. Bathsheba calmly holds Troy's body in her arms; she sends Gabriel for the doctor even though it is too late. Impelled by the quiet power of her words, Gabriel hurries off on her errand. When he returns with the doctor, he is told that Bathsheba has taken Troy back to her farm; the doctor is angry since there will probably have to be an investigation, and he does not want the body moved. They continue on to Weatherbury Farm; Liddy tells them that Bathsheba is upstairs with the body. They find Troy's body carefully prepared for burial. The doctor expresses his admiration for her iron-like strength of spirit, but Bathsheba faints—no longer able to endure the strain. The doctor's attention is diverted to Bathsheba. Liddy nurses her all night long, as she continues to insist that everything is her fault.

COMMENT: This chapter is a quiet release form the tension and excitement of the previous one. The action slows down and the characters themselves act quietly. Even the dialogue seems spoken in a whisper, like the muted tones at a funeral. This pause serves to allow the reader to "catch his breath" after the climax before proceeding with the rest of the story.

CHAPTER LV.

THE MARCH FOLLOWING—"BATHSHEBA BOLDWOOD"

In March of the next year a group of men are waiting on Yalbury Hill for the arrival of one of the two judges of the western circuit. The judge changes carriages at this point and rides on toward Casterbridge followed by most of the group, except for the men from Weatherbury Farm. The men discuss the trial that is about to start; they agree to stay at home and not upset Boldwood by their presence. The next day they wait anxiously for the news.

Meanwhile, a discovery is made that afternoon which helps to explain Boldwood's mental state, and this gives the rustics something to help keep their minds off the trial. Since the day at the fair, Boldwood's mental collapse has been suspected, especially by Gabriel and Bathsheba. The proof that his mind was crazed by love and fear of losing that love is found in a locked closet. Boldwood had spent the time from September to Christmas buying dresses, furs and jewelry, which were carefully packed away, with a date six years from the present marked and labelled "Bathsheba Boldwood."

Oak returns from the trial to report that Boldwood pleaded guilty and has been sentenced to die. The conviction that Boldwood is mentally unstable grows; once given the suggestion of insanity, many instances of his mental deterioration are recalled. Accordingly, a petition addressed to the Home Secretary listing all of this evidence is prepared and signed by those interested in Boldwood's fate.

In Weatherbury, the outcome of the petition is eagerly awaited; up until the Friday afternoon before the execution is set, no word has

come. Gabriel visits the jail to bid good-by to Boldwood and sees the carpenters preparing the platform for the execution. Gabriel returns without any hopeful news. He asks Laban Tall to ride to Casterbridge and stay until at least eleven o'clock, for if the reprieve is not received by then, there is no chance of its coming at all. Liddy hopes that Bathsheba will be spared the anguish of Boldwood's execution; she is a bit better physically than she was at Christmastime, but Boldwood's death would be too much for her to bear.

Laban leaves for Casterbridge and, at eleven o'clock, most of Bathsheba's workers wait on the road for his return. Gabriel's conscience tells him that Boldwood should die, but he pities the poor man who was once so worthy of respect. To their relief, Laban finally arrives, and reports that Boldwood has been spared; he will remain in prison "during Her Majesty's pleasure." Coggan voices joy and their feeling that good has triumphed over evil.

COMMENT: A severe retribution for Troy's murder would seem out of place and even unjust. Boldwood's stay of execution is not the *deus ex machina* technique again, since the evidence for Boldwood's madness has been carefully developed within the plot. Boldwood's punishment would not "fit the crime" if he was executed.

CHAPTER LVI.

BEAUTY IN LONELINESS—AFTER ALL

By spring, Bathsheba is better, but she remains in the house for the most part and see no one; even Liddy could not comfort her. As the summer draws near, she goes out more and begins to take an interest

in the farm. One evening in August she comes into the village for the first time since Christmas. As she enters the graveyard and walks toward Fanny's grave, she hears the church choir practising. Under the inscription ordered by Troy, another has been added: "In the same Grave Lie the Remains of the Aforesaid Francis Troy who died December 24th, 18—, Aged 26 years."

As she reads these words, the organist starts to play another hymn; Bathsheba walks to the front of the church and listens to the words of "Lead, Kindly Light." She is strangely moved by the hymn and begins to cry; the words seem to be deeply meaningful to her. She does not notice the approach of Gabriel who tells her he has come for the practice, and then she starts to leave. He lingers to talk to her and she tells him that she has come to see the tombstone, and that it seems years since the unhappy events of last Christmas.

The two begin to walk home and Gabriel informs her that he is thinking of leaving England for California the next spring; she asks what she will do without him, since she has been dependent on him for so long. He seems insistent on leaving, however, despite her pleas.

Bathsheba considers this new disaster and with great pain she comes to believe she has lost Gabriel's love. During the next three weeks, she notices more signs of his apparent loss of interest. He hardly ever comes to the farm, and sends messages or notes when he needs her instructions. Through fall and on toward Christmas, her sadness at Gabriel's loss seems to outweigh her memories of the last sad Christmas. The day after Christmas, Gabriel sends a note informing her he will not renew his engagement to work for her on the next Lady's Day (March 25).

Bathsheba breaks down and cries over the letter; she has always considered Gabriel as the mainstay of her life. She becomes so desolate in thinking she has lost her truest friend, that she walks into Gabriel's house shortly after sunset. She is nervous about this meeting and not quite sure if it is proper to call on a bachelor in his home, even if he is her manager. Gabriel, in turn, is awkward at greeting her. Bathsheba tells him of her grief at his leaving and asks if she has offended him. He explains that he is not leaving England and that he will take over Little Weatherbury Farm on May lst. He would have stayed on as her manager, but gossip about them might ruin her reputation; Gabriel is reported as waiting for Boldwood's farm with the hope of eventually winning Bathsheba. She is surprised and calls the notion absurd and too soon to think of. He seizes her words "too absurd" and agrees that she is the last person he would think of marrying. This remark upsets her; she tearfully insists she only meant that it was too soon for her to marry. He replies tenderly that things could be different if he only knew that she would marry him someday. She says he'll never know, because he will not ask; she reminds him that she is his first sweetheart. Gabriel regrets her thinking he has stopped loving her, for he only wants to spare her the gossip about them.

As she starts to leave, she tells him how glad she is that she came and that the misunderstanding between them has been cleared up; she adds that it seems as if she had come to court him. Oak remarks that this is as it should be; hè promised never again to ask her to marry him. He has patiently waited all this time, and she should not begrudge him one visit. He walks back to her house with her; instead of exchanging pretty phrases, they talk of the farm he will soon manage. They have no need of exaggerated protests of love; their love has developed through similarity of interests and through sharing

confidences and troubles. It has transcended mere infatuation or passion.

COMMENT: The developments of this chapter again suit the happy mood of the book as a whole. Gabriel's patience must be justly rewarded. The reader remembers that Gabriel has sworn that he would not offer marriage to Bathsheba again; his words to Bathsheba reminding her of his long devotion are not a rebuke, but a statement that things are finally what they should be. The remark indicates that Bathsheba is no longer the vain young lady of the earlier proposal; the new Bathsheba is not too proud to accept Gabriel—she even suggests the marriage.

The lasting strength of this marriage is suggested by their lack of need for "pretty phrases." The situation is totally opposite that of Bathsheba's former marriage, which relied so heavily on flattery and passion.

CHAPTER LVII.

A FOGGY NIGHT AND MORNING—CONCLUSION

Some time after Bathsheba's visit to Gabriel, the two plan a private wedding. A few days later, Gabriel meets Coggan and walks with him to the village; he explains he is going to see Laban (recently appointed clerk of the parish). Gabriel finally confides that Bathsheba and he will be married the next morning and requests him to keep the news secret.

Coggan is surprised only at the secrecy, for he has thought of the match for some time. Coggan reminds him that Tall's wife will spread the news throughout the parish, and offers to ask Laban to

see Gabriel outside. Susan tells him that Laban is out, however; Coggan is finally instructed to tell her to ask Laban to meet Bathsheba at the church the next day. Coggan adds that the matter involves Bathsheba's contract with another farmer to take shares for a long period of time. Their visit to the vicar is less troublesome and arouses no curiosity.

Bathsheba sleeps little that night, and rises long before the hour at which she is to be called; she tells Liddy only that Oak is coming for dinner. When Liddy worries about her reputation, she whispers the truth to her. The morning is damp and dismal but Gabriel and Bathsheba set out cheerfully, arm-in-arm for the first time in their lives. Bathsheba is plainly dressed, but her happiness restores color to her face; Gabriel's request that she wear her hair as she did when he first saw her suggests that she is not old at twenty-four, nor an entirely different girl from the one he watched on Norcombe Hill.

Only Liddy, Laban and the parson are at the church; the two are married quietly and Gabriel moves into Bathsheba's house, which is a more practical arrangement. As Bathsheba pours him some tea, they hear the noise of a cannon firing and trumpets blowing. The villagers have come to celebrate the wedding; the noise is identified as the music from the Weatherbury band. Gabriel invites Mark Clark, Jan Coggan and the others in for some refreshments; they however promise to call on the two sometime soon and ask that refreshments be sent instead to Warren's Malthouse. Gabriel's casual use of "my wife" when referring to Bathsheba impresses the merry villagers; Gabriel sounds like a husband of long standing, rather than a newly-wed. Gabriel and Bathsheba are quite amused by this joking as their friends take their leave.

COMMENT: The story could end in no other way than by the happy prospect of a long, serene life for Bathsheba and Gabriel. Each has weathered many trials and learned much from them; they are justly entitled to their happiness. Bathsheba has never expected to find happiness in marriage, but she finally marries for love, and not infatuation or guilt. The novel begins and ends with Gabriel, who moves from modest success, through failure, and then returns to happiness and prosperity. He would warmly agree that refreshments has never been sent to Warren's for a happier occasion.

It is fitting that the novel ends with a comment from the most endearing of the rustics, Poorgrass, since the novel is a pastoral one and the rustics have had their share in the development of the plot, and especially Joseph, whose lapses into "seeing double" provided for the circumstances by which Bathsheba matures and finds happiness.

CHARACTER ANALYSES

GABRIEL OAK. Gabriel's appearance marks him as a man who is not concerned with modern developments or surface attraction. His clothes are as humble and traditional as his interests.

His trust does not lie in the machine, or man-made world, but in nature; his closeness to nature is symbolized by his name.

His devotion to Bathsheba is marked by a patient acceptance, both of her faults and her need to mature. His sense of responsibility and skill in farming causes her to trust him implicitly; for all of his gifts, Gabriel is not proud. He realizes that fortune is apt to change quickly (as it does in his own life) and he does not resent Boldwood's assuming his place at the sheepshearing feast. He accepts trouble or good fortune as it comes, without question, and he can even be cheerful in difficult times, as when he plays the flute at the hiring fair despite his disappointment at not finding a place.

All of Gabriel's good qualities can be summarized in his serene acceptance of his limitations, as well as of his talents. He knows how far his skills can take him, and does not make himself unhappy by reaching for that which is beyond his grasp. He respects himself as a man and as an individual, and this dignity causes the rustics to admire and respect him. They do not begrudge his advancement, but feel he has earned it himself and that his prosperity is a just reward.

His conscience is moral and upright; he knows that Boldwood should

be punished for murdering Troy, yet his compassion causes him to hope for Boldwood's reprieve. He cannot bring himself to lie to Bathsheba or to flatter her; he answers her requests for his opinion simply, honestly and frankly, no matter what it costs him in her good favor. This sense of the "rightness" of things makes him refuse her first request to save the injured sheep, and to allow her to make the first gesture toward their eventual marriage.

BATHSHBEBA. Bathsheba's beauty and charming ways endear her to most people, even Gabriel who is not blind to her faults. She is thoroughly independent in spirit and insists on having her own way, an admirable quality that unfortunately lapses into pride and vanity at the beginning of the story. But it must be remembered that Bathsheba is still a young girl at this point and maturity and trial will lessen her faults and create an admirable woman of character and dignity.

At first, she is inclined to be impetuous; she acts without reflection (she sends the foolish valentine to Boldwood, for example). She likes to be admired and flattered and so becomes a perfect prey for Troy, who dazzles her by his sweet words and glittering swordplay.

Just like a child, she can display flashes of temper and bewilder poor Liddy with her outbursts. She balances this, however, by her genuine regret for her lack of control. She is intensely female in her defense of Troy, as Liddy points out, and in her sudden desire to be admired and respected by her neighboring farmers (which causes her to set out to win Boldwood's attention). Her sudden rise to prosperity in inheriting her uncle's farm gives her a wonderful chance to display her childish wish to command and to require respect; the sense of power which this position of authority brings, she eventually learns,

must be tempered with kindness and understanding.

As she matures, she becomes genuinely concerned with other people and learns to respect important things, such as her friendship with Gabriel. Her charity toward Fanny is exemplary; despite her disappointment at Troy's bond with Fanny, she does her best to treat Fanny's corpse with consideration and kindness.

The best evaluation of her is Hardy's: "She is of the stuff of which great men's mothers are made."

BOLDWOOD. Boldwood appears on the surface to be reserved, staid and remote, but submerged within him is a disastrous whirlpool of emotion that finally erupts with the provocation of Bathsheba.

Respected as a "gentleman" by the community, he is like Edward Arlington Robinson's Richard Cory who "fluttered pulses" when he greeted his neighbors, but who rarely mixed in their company. The villagers are astonished when Boldwood plans a party, but the reader is aware that Boldwood's remoteness is ending when he joins Bathsheba's song at the shearing feast.

His love for Bathsheba is expressed by an overwhelming desire to possess her; he becomes so preoccupied with this one desire that his rational mind deserts him. He allows his farm to run down; he "lowers" himself in his own eyes by confiding his troubles to an outsider, Gabriel. He becomes reckless when Bathsheba seems so close to his grasp; his wild joy and fear at losing her again causes his workers to pity him.

His obsession allows him the secret delight of buying gifts for

Bathsheba, including an expensive ring, but it blinds him to the fact that his selfish determination and demands for justice are forcing Bathsheba into a marriage she detests. She is overwhelmed by the force of his passion and by the feelings of guilt he raises. Had the marriage ever taken place, Bathsheba would probably have been destroyed in her misery, and Boldwood disenchanted by his prize.

It is his genuine kindness, especially early in the novel (in his treatment of and concern for Fanny), however, as well as his past responsibility as a farmer that serves to maintain some respect and compassion from his associates. It is rather sad that few real friends can be found to sign the petition for his reprieve, rather, it is only those truly interested in his fate who work to save him. The villagers who tactfully stay away from his trial and anxiously await news of his trial are remembering the old Boldwood and not the madman; they are genuinely concerned for the man who has so "changed" from what he once was.

TROY. He would seem one-sided in his villany, had he not felt some genuine remorse at Fanny's death and repented his harsh treatment of her. If Bathsheba matures beyond her impulsiveness of her early actions, Troy never does. He decides to claim Bathsheba by a theatrical entrance at Boldwood's party, and never considers her feelings as he kisses Fanny and her child, and then departs without further word.

Unlike Gabriel, he is never satisfied, but is continually restless and unable to feel peace and security (from his first morning as master of Weatherbury Farm he plans to change and "modernize"). Like his skill at the sword exercise, he is attractive and thrilling, but rather shallow and empty. Furthermore, he feels free to lie to women, and

he is almost contemptible in refusing to end Bathsheba's anguish at his loss, until he is sure he will not be burdened with her support.

Like Bathsheba, he insists on independence and freedom; unlike her, he never realizes the responsibilities this independence involves. He enjoys his authority as master of the farm, but it is only a role for him and he is not concerned with the wellbeing of his workers, or with the prosperity of the farm.

To be sure, he is to be admired for his stand on refusing Boldwood's "bargain," but had he not married Bathsheba (and been assured of financial security), he might have been tempted to take Boldwood's money as a "bonus" for marrying Fanny, as he had originally intended.

CRITICAL COMMENTARY

GENERAL ESTIMATE: *Far From the Madding Crowd* can hardly be regarded as Hardy's greatest work. At its best, it is a pleasant, restful book, which offers the peaceful repose of an idyllic view of rustic England. Critics who look for more than a quiet pastoral setting and a well-constructed plot are apt to be disappointed. Henry James, for example, misses the strong points of the novel in his condemnation of Hardy. Lascelle Abercrombie, on the other hand, understands Hardy's choice of the pastoral, and appreciates both the description of nature and the comedy presented by "the band of labourers," which he terms Shakespearian, for its faithful rendering of the lives of the rustics.

Among more modern critics, the novel receives either scant attention in any general consideration of Hardy's work, or brings agreement on the virtues (such as the picture of rustic life) and vices (preoccupation with plot). These modern critics generally agree on terming Hardy a "good transitional novelist."

His long life span caused Hardy to straddle both the Victorian and the modern periods; both are represented in his work. He is a traditional novelist in his carefully constructed plots, as Albert Guerard points out, and yet modern in his interest in the psychological development of his character, and most important for the work of later novelists, in his use of the novel as a reflection of modern problems. Guerard adds that Hardy pioneered in developing symbolic and allegoric levels in the novel form; he agrees with Morton Zabel that

Hardy's work prepared the way for the works of Joyce, Proust, Gide and Kafka.

It is surprising that Hardy can also join the modern novelists through his love and respect for the past greatness of rustic England. With Lawrence, Ford Madox Ford and E. M. Forster, he contrasts this serene world, so fond of tradition and permanence, with the busy, crass commercial world that was slowly destroying the old world. Wing develops this by pointing out that Pennyways, in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, represents a kind of canker eating into this healthy way of life, and thus he can further be considered a symbol of the current destructive force.

Since we are sure of Hardy's acceptance as a great novelist, it would be well to consider here the features of his novels (and particularly *Far From the Madding Crowd*) that have been most often discussed by his critics.

PLOT: James Wright joins the other critics who consider Hardy's plots as symmetrical; Wright goes a step further and actually diagrams the plot of *Far From the Madding Crowd*. Joseph Warren Beach agrees that the plot is essential to the nature of Hardy's novels, and goes one step further in saying it becomes their *raison d'etre*. Beach does add that plot discrepencies do exist, and that Hardy is forced to use techniques such as the *deus ex machina* for this reason; the critic poses this question for consideration: Does the setting exist for the plot, or the plot for the setting? At least in the case of *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Beach thinks that the novel was planned with the setting in mind, and then the plot was suited to the setting. This might help to account for the need to use outside forces to solve his plot problems.

Both Abercrombie and E. M. Forster praise Hardy's plot structure, however; Abercrombie speaks of the "lucid intricacy" and "richness of incident," while Forster points out that Hardy carefully arranges events with emphasis on causality. He would probably take exception to Beach's point about the importance of the setting in considering the major novel, since he sees the ground plan of the novel as the plot, with the characters ordered to acquiesce to its demands; but he does not consider *Far From the Madding Crowd* separately from the major novels as Beach does. A recent criticism of plot structure (by Walter O'Grady) sets Hardy below James in integrating plot with the novel, since his events flow "outward" and "backward" (or, in other words, the causality of action depends on previous action—which Abercrombie does not see as a fault).

From out of this apparent confusion of ideas on plot, what common ground can we find? We can safely affirm, that for better or worse, Hardy's plots are symmetrically arranged: there is an obvious pattern to be noticed in the novels, and that each action proceeds from a former action, and depends upon it. If we join the more modern critics, whose interests are in features other than plot, we must look further for Hardy's stature as novelist.

POETRY: In *Aspects of the Novel*, E. M. Forster gives us an important clue in evaluating Hardy: he is essentially a poet. Guerard joins Forster in suggesting the importance of this connection between novelist and poet. It is in this use of poetry in the novel that Hardy joins the modern novelists, for poetry in this analysis, is extended to Hardy's use of language and symbol in his novels.

Wright agrees that the use of poetic language adds another dimension to Hardy's work; the novelist and poet are not at war in the

same man, but Hardy makes use of his poetic language in his novels. He adds that the nature-descriptions are not mere padding, but are embodied in the spirit of *Far From the Madding Crowd*.

Hardy's poetic language includes his use of local dialect (which Abercrombie feels is effective, if not accurate), and his use of allusive language to add a subtle strength to his novels. *Far From the Madding Crowd* is rich in allusion, both to Biblical and to literary sources. Beach finds the Biblical allusions far more effective in his novel, since it seems to fit more naturally into the simple life of the rustics. The literary allusions seem more forced, and sometimes involve a ridiculous comparison (Gabriel's watching of Bathsheba is compared to Satan's first gaze at Paradise in Milton's *Paradise Lost*). A particularly amusing Biblical allusion is made when Liddy refers to the approaching rustics as "Philistines."

Most recently, those critics interested in Hardy's poetic techniques employed in his novels, have been considering the symbolic level in his works. "Oak" for the choice of Gabriel's name is obvious; but there are more subtle uses, such as the "mirror" and the "sword" that Richard C. Carpenter discusses.

CHARACTERIZATION: If the psychological depths involved in Hardy's later novels are not to be found in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, we can at least find consolation in his effective blending of his rustic characters with the setting and plot. Guerard's statement about the compact personality of the rustics supports Abercrombie's perception of the "action in a group" by the rustics. In this novel, perhaps more than several of the later novels, the rustics act as chorus (or general comment) on the action; in cases such as Poorgrass's neglect of Fanny's body, the rustics actually become involved in the

action and direct its progress.

In viewing the rustics, Guerard tells us that they have only a past history, and little *present* involvement; they are immune to suffering and change, and their stability weighs the action and characterization. George Wing agrees by stating that the rustics are a personification of old ways and superstitions. All of the critics agree that the rustics add strength and depth to this novel.

Wright goes further in praising Oak, and especially his stability and patient endurance than many other critics do. It is through Gabriel's "wise passiveness" that the other characters and events are measured. Even Troy's rather one-sided villainy is rejected by Wing; Troy is aggressively masculine, and his faithlessness and callousness can be viewed as a rejection of female domination. A hint of even psychological probing can be found in the portrait of Boldwood. Thus, it is fairly obvious that Hardy's characterization deserves some approval and it does assist us in assessing Hardy's strength as a novelist.

HUMOR: It may seem strange to consider humor as a feature in Hardy's novels, especially since he is often termed a "Victorian pessimist." In his later novels, Hardy often manages to lash out at the dominating outside forces which control the action; a hint of this can be seen in the mischance that sends Fanny to the wrong church. If not as apparent in the other novels, humor is a vital factor in assessing the worth of *Far From the Madding Crowd*.

The humor suggested by the rustics' conversations and actions is obvious. When Cainy Bell returns from Bath to tell of his discovery of Bathsheba and Troy, the reader's curiosity is strained to the utmost.

Gabriel and his fellow workers wait patiently for the news as Cainy alternately chokes and sputters. Then the rustics join the fun and question Cainy about Bath, much to Gabriel's consternation. Wing points out this episode as one of the most humorous in the book, but we have many: Coggan and Poorgrass at the fair, Laban Tall's troubles with his domineering wife, and the merry-making at the shearing feast, among others. Abercrombie calls the rich vein of humor in this novel "Shakespearian," and adds that the humor suits the rustics, since it is far from the sophisticated wit of urban life. Grimsditch joins the general chorus of praise by calling the humor "rare whimsical comedy."

IRONY: Irony is also involved in the novel; grim humor pervades the reaction to Troy's disastrous planting of flowers on Fanny's grave. Beach is credited with pointing out the irony in the title itself; even in this peaceful setting, "ignoble strife" appears and complicates life.

SUMMARY: However sharply the critics disagree on the value of Hardy's symmetrically arranged plots, general agreement can be found on these positive features: Hardy's use of the rustics is effective, his poetic language (especially allusion and symbolism) has added another dimension to his novels, and his humor lightens the sad events of the stories. Most of these features, along with an abiding interest in England's traditions, have helped to make Hardy a major novelist.

Far From the Madding Crowd remains a minor novel; perhaps it lacks the stature and depth of the later novels, precisely because Hardy was developing his techniques in this early work. Wright, however, feels that there is a quality about the novel that endears it

to most of its readers. Perhaps it is liked because of its language, or its humor; Wright seems to enjoy it for its characterization, especially that of Gabriel, "the genius of the places that are fresh and green." Whatever the quality, or combination of qualities, the novel is still being read and enjoyed; and, as Wright says, "There is something about the book that inspires people to love it, and love... does not yield to ... even judicious argument."

ESSAY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. How does the pastoral setting affect the development of the novel?

ANSWER: As its name implies, the pastoral novel concerns itself with rustic life and the lives of simple people. It gives the author a chance to explore the charm of the native customs shown in this novel, for example, by the warm, gay shearing feast. Terrible storms or fires might temporarily destroy the peaceful life, but troubles are balanced by cheerful evenings at Warren's, fondly recalling old times and old faces. Nature is at its best; cold winters are not destructive but present the opportunity of enjoying the observation of the constellations on a bright, cold night. Springs and summers bring days of fresh, green beauty.

Because of this connection with this "primitive," peaceful world, the pastoral loses its contact with the "real" world. By its identification as "pastoral," the reader must accept the conventions offered; he enters another world and cannot judge the novel in terms of hard realism. We find the characters generally good-natured, willing workers, content with their lot (Henery Fray is an exception, but then he is not malicious and his faults are amusing). They sometimes seem "too good to be true," especially Gabriel, whose nobility of character allies him more to the hero of melodrama than "real life." But we have been warned by the pastoral setting not to expect realism in characterization and do not look for it in plot, either. Sailors "just happen" to save Troy from drowning; Boldwood is saved by a last-minute

reprieve, and the patient Gabriel wins Bathsheba.

Hardy has purposely chosen the pastoral setting, partly from his nostalgia for the way of life that was rapidly disappearing, even as he wrote about it, and partly out of respect for the tradition-bound villagers. Time has little meaning for the people of Weatherbury Farm; fifty or one hundred years see little changed. Troy seems doubly villanous when he plans to "modernize," the reader is confirmed in assuming that the sheep shearing, which has been conducted in the same way for centuries will continue as long as these rustics survive. England seems at the height of its health, strength and power, when it is peopled by characters such as Gabriel. Hardy's capturing of this serenity and idyllic happiness serves both as a contrast to the present commercialized spirit and as a warning of the hazards to be faced, if this life is ignored or lost.

2. Describe the importance of irony in the novel.

ANSWER: Irony, in its context of "grim humor," enhances the enjoyment of the novel. Prophetic warnings and curses are uttered and carried out, in a way not often contemplated by their speaker.

The sense of tragedy is deepened by a sad twist to a situation, such as Fanny's going to the wrong church for her wedding. A more patient man than Troy would have appreciated the absurdity of blaming Fanny; she seems constantly maneuvered by an outside force. The few minutes' delay costs her Troy and even her life; Troy's whole life is changed by his angry dismissal of her.

Troy fails to appreciate this outside force, until it turns on him and ruins his carefully planted flowers. At the same time, the reader ob-

serves the tragedy of this destruction and the grim joke on Troy for his belated kindness to Fanny.

This grim humor is gentler when dealing with Bathsheba's embarrassment at having to send for Gabriel, the only one who can save her sheep, just after she has dismissed him. Both she and Gabriel do not try to fight this outside force, but accept it stoically.

It is also ironic that Bathsheba should send her valentine to the one man who could not treat it lightly, and that she should have to pay so heavily for her childish whim. It is a reversal, however, in that this guilt and repentence help her to become a better person. By the end of the novel, the girl who stared at herself in the mirror with such satisfaction becomes the woman who wishes she did not look so attractive as she prepares for Boldwood's party.

Irony lends a sad humor to the events of the novel and deepens the sense of tragedy and loss, as the characters involve themselves in events they cannot really foresee.

3. What role does nature play in the story?

ANSWER: Hardy fully utilizes his poetic talents in descriptions of nature. His language becomes poetic as he describes the beautiful dawn and spring days. Furthermore, the descriptions are integral in creating the atmosphere of the events occurring in the shadow of nature; the reader grasps the "feel" of the gloomy weather, as Poorgrass brings Fanny's body home, or as the strong rain washes away the flowers from her grave. The descriptions assume an almost symbolic level, as in the sound of the water outside Troy's barracks.

The force of nature can be damaging to those who do not relate to it. Gabriel is rewarded for his contact with the world of nature with an ability to observe and control it, which wins him the admiration and approval of Bathsheba and her workers. Troy and Boldwood are impervious to nature's charms; they battle it, and are destroyed by it. Boldwood neglects his farm, Troy nearly causes catastrophe by not covering the ricks, and rain washes away his only attempt at relating to nature. Troy is nearly drowned at sea and is destroyed by an "unnatural" force in Boldwood.

For those who live in harmony with nature, as Hardy pleads, there is a serene, happy life, as Bathsheba eventually learns. She trusts Gabriel's judgment in the natural world and finds happiness, she is alert to the beauty of the dawn after her tragic discovery, and is refreshed by it. It will be remembered that she ignores the night's beginning to settle about her as she considers searching for Troy at Bath (and is eventually made unhappy by that meeting), and that she is bored when caring for her aunt's cows. Anyone who could so enjoy a morning ride, however, as Bathsheba's joyous trip to the mill, is not totally devoid of feeling for nature.

4. What effect did the serialization in the *Cornhill* Magazine have on the development of the plot?

ANSWER: In the interest of good serialization, Hardy had to shape the novel into episodes and use methods of keeping up reader interest. He did this by techniques such as hiding the identity of the character involved in the action with a known character. Several times Fanny appears as "a woman" who meets Troy; Hardy does not identify the soldier waiting to be married until the end of the chapter. Gabriel helps an unknown farmer, who turns out to be

Bathsheba; he and Coggan pursue a "robber" on the road to Bath, only to find Bathsheba driving her own gig. Hardy also employed the device of a climax at the end of each episode to insure the reader's purchase of the next installment.

He obviously had to have an outline of the development of the story as a whole, in order to arrange his episodes toward a logical conclusion. This careful structure of the plot makes the book "symmetrical" in action (much admired by Hardy's contemporaries, even if modern audiences seem not very interested in it). The novel is also necessarily "episodic," that is, capable of being broken up into recognizable blocks of action. Hardy was also free to arrange a change in locality or character involvement as he opened each new episode.

Perhaps it was the magazine serialization, as much as the pastoral setting, that caused Hardy to arrange outcomes as he did; reader interest would demand "poetic justice," in that Boldwood and Troy must suffer, as Gabriel and Bathsheba prosper. This involved *deus ex machina* complications, which were not always beneficial to the novel.

GLOSSARY

ACHERON: River of woe in Hades.

ALDEBARAN: red star in the eye of Taurus; brightest star in Hyades.

ALL-FOURS: card game.

APHRODITE: Greek goddess of love and beauty; Roman counterpart: Venus.

ARARAT: *Genesis*: Noah's ark comes to rest on this mountain.

ARCADIAN: any scene of simple, pleasant, quiet life, usually pastoral.

ASHTORETH: Hebrew goddess Astarte, Phoenician goddess of love, fertility.

BAILIFF: custodian, overseer, manager of an estate.

BALBOA, VASCO DE (1475-1517): Spanish explorer, discoverer of the Pacific Ocean.

BATH: city in southwestern England, famous watering spot.

BEAR: northern constellation.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER: early seventeenth-century dramatists.

BETELGEUX: variable red giant star of first magnitude, near Orion.

BIFFINS: red cooking apples.

BLASTED: withered, blighted, injured by air.

CANDLEMAS: February 2nd, Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

CAPELLA: a star of first magnitude, near Auriga.

CASSIOPEIA: northern constellation.

CASTOR AND POLLUX: two bright stars in Gemini.

CHAMFER: fluted surface formed by cutting away angle formed by

two faces of a piece of timber or stone.

CHARLES'S WAIN: the Big Dipper.

COSTARD: English variety of large apple.

CRETAN: (from the expression "lie like a Cretan") Cretans had a reputation for lying; an ancient sophism was based on this reputation.

CYCLOPS: race of giants with one eye in the middle of the forehead; they were shepherds, according to Homer.

DANIEL: Hebrew prophet.

DIANA: Roman virgin-huntress goddess.

DOG STAR: Sirius.

DOU, GERARD: Dutch painter (1613-1675).

DRABBET: coarse, drab linen fabric used for smocks, etc.

DRYAD: Greek nymphs whose lives were dependent on the trees they inhabited.

ELYMAS: sorcerer and false prophet.

EROS: Greek god of love; Roman counterpart: Cupid.

ESPALIER: railing or trellis on which fruit trees or shrubs are trained.

EVE OF ST. THOMAS: either the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle (Dec. 21) or St. Thomas of Canterbury (Dec. 29). Since it was supposed to be the shortest day of the year, Hardy probably means the former feast.

FELON: inflammation of a finger or toe.

FLAXMAN, JOHN: English sculptor (1755-1826).

GIG: light, two-wheeled one-horse carriage.

GILPIN'S RIG: refers to a humorous poem by William Cowper, Englsih poet (1731-1800).

GONZALO: character in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Act I, Scene i; he prays for a dry death.

GUILDENSTERN: character in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Act II,

Scene ii: source of quotation).

GURGOYLE (gargoyle): waterspouts often grotesquely carved.

HADES: hell, lower regions (Greek).

HIPPOCRATES: 460? -377 B.C., Greek physician, Father of Medicine.

HOBBEMA, MEYNDERT: Dutch painter (1638-1709).

HOREB: also called Sinai; mountain where the Ten Commandments were given to Moses.

HUSTINGS: platforms from which candidates for Parliament were formerly nominated.

HYLAS: a young armor-bearer, a favorite of Hercules captured by the Naiads at Mysii.

IXION: King of Thessalians, bound to an endlessly revolving wheel.

JACOB: *Genesis*: Jacob worked for Laban 7 years to win Rachel.

JOVE: Roman God Jupiter; Greek counterpart: Zeus.

JUGGERNAUT: massive force that advances, irresistibly crushing whatever is in its path.

LADY DAY: Annunciation Day—March 25.

LAODICEAN: lukewarm, or indifferent, as were the Christians of ancient Laodicea.

LETTRE DE CACHET: sealed letter.

LUCINA: Greek goddess of childbirth, identified with Juno.

MAJOLICA: variety of Renaissance Italian pottery, glazed and richly colored and ornamented.

MELPOMENE: muse of tragedy.

MERCURY: Roman god—messenger.

METHEGLIN: beverage made of fermented honey and water, mead.

MINERVA: Roman goddess, Greek counterpart: Athena; goddess of wisdom in peace and skill at war.

MOSES: Hebrew prophet and lawgiver, led Israelites out of Egypt.

NAPOLEON AT ST. HELENA: island in the Atlantic where the

French general and ruler died on May 5, 1821.

NEBULA: one large class of celestial structures.

NICENE CREED: profession of belief formulated and decreed by the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D.

NIGHT THOUGHTS: gloomy poem by Edward Young (1683-1765).

NIJNI NOVGOROD: site of famous fair; the city was an important trade center especially in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; it is located in North Russia.

NORTH STAR: polestar, star toward which the axis of the earth points.

NYMPHEAN: lesser goddesses, represented as beautiful maidens who lived in mountains, forests and waters.

OCHREOUS: yellowish color.

OLYMPUS: mountain in Macedonia, mythical home of the Greek gods.

ORION: constellation on the equator, represented by a hunter with belt and sword.

PALIMPSEST: parchment, tablet, etc., which has been used two or three times, the earlier writing having been erased.

PATTENS: type of overshoe with high wooden sole to raise the feet from water or mud.

PHILISTINES: used here by Liddy to describe the rustics as uncultured, unenlightened.

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS: allegoric work by John Bunyan (1628-1688).

PILLARS OF HERCULES: two promontories (high point of land or rock) at the eastern end of the Strait of Gibraltar. It is fabled that Hercules set them there.

PLANTATION: grove, or group of planted trees.

PLEIADES: group of stars in constellation Taurus.

POUSSIN, NICOLAS: French painter (1594-1655).

PURIFICATION DAY: February 2 (feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary).

RICK: stack or pile of gain, straw or hay in the open air.

RUYSDAEL, JACOB: Dutch painter (1628? -1682).

SAINT-SIMON, COMTE CLAUDE: French philosopher and socialist (1760-1825).

SENGREEN: houseleek.

SEXAGESIMA: second Sunday before Lent.

SHADRACH, MESHACH, ABEDNEGO: *Daniel*: Nebuchadnezzar sent these three young men to die in a fiery furnace, but they were saved.

SHIMEI, SON OF GERA: man who opposed David and cursed him.

SIRIUS: star of constellation Canis Major, brightest star in heavens.

SPECTATOR: periodical by Addison and Steele, issued from Mar. 1711 to Dec. 1712.

SQUARE OF PEGASUS: one of the northern constellations, presented as a winged horse.

STADDLES: lower parts of stack, or its supporting frame or base.

"SWOLLEN WITH WIND AND THE RANK MIST THEY DRAW": quotation from Milton's *Lycidas*, a pastoral elegy (1637).

TERBURG: Ter Borch, Gerard; Dutch painter (1617-1681).

TERGIVERSATION: desertion of a cause, party or faith; shifting, evasion.

THATCH: covering for a roof, grain stack, etc., or to cover with straw, reeds, leaves, etc.

THESMOTHETE: from Athenian women who were judges and lawgivers, it has come to mean "one who lays down the law."

THOR: god of thunder—Norse or Scandinavian mythology.

TOPHET: chaos, darkness, Hell.

TROCHAR: probe, stiletto-type instrument to insert drainage tube.

TURNER, JOSEPH: English painter (1775-1851).

TURPIN: famous eighteenth-century highwayman.

VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES: meditative poem by Samuel Johnson (1709-1784).

VEGA: star of the first magnitude, brightest star in constellation Lyar.

WHITE MONDAY: day after Whitsunday (Pentecost); usually a bank holiday.

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引　言

背景介绍： 虽然托马斯·哈代出生于维多利亚时代的英国，并且一直以维多利亚时期的小说家著称，但他却和20世纪的一些小说家，如D·H·劳伦斯、福特·马克多斯·福特和E·M·福斯特有着共同的兴趣：他深深地迷恋英国的往昔与乡村生活。用他自己的话说，威塞克斯原是英国历史上的一个地名；在他的笔下，它却成了曾经是盎格鲁·萨克逊帝国的一个区域的名称。

1840年6月2日，哈代本人就出生在这个地方——离道塞郡（也就是他小说中的卡斯特桥市）很近的布洛克汉普顿高地。由于他幼时体质较弱，他的早期教育是由他母亲在家中给予的。也是母亲激发了他对古典文学的热爱。与此同时，他的父亲，一个建筑师兼承包商，又使他从小就对建筑产生了兴趣。

八岁左右时，他开始到道塞郡入校学习。由于每天在上学时要走很长的一段乡村小路，他对路边的景色就十分熟悉。在道塞郡，他一直求学到16岁左右。在这之后，他到道塞郡的一家建筑公司——约翰·希克斯公司，当了一名学徒。在这家公司工作期间，他把大部分的业余时间都花在了学习古典文学上面。1862年，哈代来到伦敦，在一个叫亚瑟·布罗姆菲尔德的建筑师手下工作。这段时间内他一直继续学习古典文学，一边自修，一边到国王学院听课。1867年，他回到道塞郡，在希克斯公司做修复教堂的工作。

文学生涯： 在伦敦居住期间，哈代对文学的兴趣使他产生了从事专业文学创作的念头。他写了一些诗歌和文章，还有一篇小说——《穷人与贵妇人》(1868)。这本小说被出版商退了回来并被毁掉了。一位在当时已颇有名气的小说家乔治·梅雷迪斯建议哈代不要写讽刺时弊的文章，而应去写一些情节性、故事性较强的小说。这之后，他匿名创作的小说《非常手段》被出版社发表了，这使

哈代成了职业小说家。他的另一部小说《一双蓝色的秋波》也是匿名发表的。然而,哈代在文学上的成就是一直到 1874 年《远离尘嚣》发表后才被公认的。同年,他与在康沃尔修复教堂时结识的姑娘埃玛·吉福德结了婚。夫妇俩最终在马克斯盖特定居下来。哈代在那里度过了他的后半生。

晚年生活: 在道塞郡,哈代写出了他的几部重要作品,包括《还乡》(1878)、《卡斯特桥市长》(1886)、《苔丝》(1891)和《无名的裘德》(1895)。这些小说在正式出版之前都曾在杂志上以连载的形式发表过。在他的作品中,"有争议的"主题常常惹恼维多利亚时期的读者,哈代因此不得不被迫放弃了小说这种文学创作形式。他晚年的作品大部分是短篇小说和诗歌(特别是 1904、1906 和 1908 年相继发表的三部体诗剧《列王:拿破仑战争之戏剧》)。

1912 年,哈代的第一位夫人去世了。在这之前的一段岁月中他们的婚姻生活并不如意。1914 年,他与弗洛伦斯·达格代尔再次结婚,哈代却于 1828 年 1 月 11 日先她离开了人世。在他去世后,哈代夫人写出了一部最重要的哈代传。他的骨灰被葬在了威斯敏斯特大教堂中。

对大自然的兴趣: 在哈代的许多以威塞克斯为背景的小说中,大自然都被描绘成一种严酷无情的力量。《还乡》中的尤斯塔西亚和威迪弗因不爱大自然最后以被淹死而告终。大自然的这种严酷无情在《远离尘嚣》这部小说中也有体现,如暴风雨对芭思希芭草垛的威胁,以及加布里埃·奥克的羊群之死。

然而,在这部小说中,对大自然更多的描写却都带有一种愉快的基调。这里有对大自然最美好一面的描写,如温暖的春日和夏日村民的洗理、修剪羊毛的情景,还有寒冬夜空中最明亮的星星。这种描写不仅仅是景色的描写;它是整体中必不可缺的部分,因为它渲染了气氛,在整个情节发展中起着必不可少的作用。

哈代对自然界的感悟也是非常细致准确的。如春日的一天，当博德伍德在田间散步时，几株金凤花弄脏了他的靴子。哈代对这些花草细致的描写向我们充分展示了他对自然界敏锐的感悟力。

此外，哈代的小说中有对乡村生活最完整的描写。坦白地说，这种生活并不轻松，但它却给人们提供了像麦芽作坊中的和剪羊毛后庆祝时的最幸福的时光。在这里，英国的乡村生活是最美好的。而且，在对加布里埃的性格刻画、他的职业描写，以及他与大自然的密切关系的描写中也都带有一种老式田园牧歌般的情调。当他吹起长笛时，我们仿佛感觉到菲利浦·西德尼的作品《阿卡狄亚》中桃花源般的世界就在我们身边了。

威塞克斯： 可以说哈代在小说创作上的成就很大程度上是由于他选定了威塞克斯作为小说的背景。我们从现在的地图上还能找到哈代从小就熟悉的这个地方。盎格鲁·萨克逊帝国包括了南部的这几个郡：从东边的萨里郡，到西边的布里斯多尔海峡，再到德文郡和康沃尔郡交界的边境。在英国历史上，这个地方很富有传奇色彩。这里有克尔特、古罗马、萨克逊和中古时期的传奇故事。（在道塞郡附近还有神秘的古巨石阵遗址和少女城堡这座巨大的古城堡。）一般来说，哈代的威塞克斯只局限在道塞郡附近的区域内。

对于哈代来说，威塞克斯不仅仅是一个具体的地域，他更看中的是它所代表的经济与社会次序，以及构成那种次序的一切生活方式与习俗。他怀念英国急速工业化的过程中失去的朴素习俗和乡村的原有特性。他在小说中用再现它们的方式保持了这种次序。

虽然他创造出来的乡村人物的语言比真实的乡村语言通常显得“文雅”些，但它却能表现这个地区的村民们的纯朴、幽默和人情味儿。从小说中人物所讲的很多故事里，我们都能体会到这些乡村人物所代表的昔日的价值（如在《远离尘嚣》中人们所喜欢的老酿

酒师讲的故事)。就连哈代最终在马克斯盖特定居这件事本身也几乎具有象征意义,它象征着他把英国乡村不朽的往昔选作作品的中心。

《远离尘嚣》: 这个题目来自大家所熟悉的18世纪诗人托马斯·格雷的名诗《写于乡村教堂的挽歌》。这首诗描写了那些“远离尘嚣的不光彩的争斗”的村民的葬礼。这个题目对小说本身虽具有讽刺意味,却是一个最贴切的评价。

这部小说是应《康希尔》杂志的编辑莱斯利·斯蒂芬斯的邀稿而写成的连载小说。1874 年它以连载的形式匿名发表在这份杂志上。令哈代气恼的是人们最初把它看成了乔治·爱略特的作品。由于这部小说的主要内容是对乡村景色的描写,所以它几乎被称作是一部“景色小说”。

在这部小说中,情节围绕着加布里埃·奥克这个人物对称地展开。一开始,他是一个家道不错的农民,在经历了一些经济上的挫折之后,他变得比以前更加富有了。他遇到了芭思希芭·埃费汀,并爱上了她。他不厌其烦地支持她的一切浪漫性质的冒险,最终赢得了她的爱。哈代总是充分利用情节,前面看上去并没有什么特别意义的小事都是后面情节的重要伏笔。例如当范妮离开弗兰克·特罗伊的军营小屋时,人们很难把从屋外听到的笑声与河流中汩汩的流水声区别开,而在后面读到雨水把花瓣从范妮坟上冲走的情节时,我们自然又想起了那河中汩汩的流水声。

虽然哈代从未忽视过公众对他的连载小说的反应,并且是在通俗杂志上成名的,但他一直都是一位从未放弃过自己创作理想的小说家。

创作特色: 在哈代的小说中,那些事业成功、内心快乐的人物都是与周围环境融为一体的。其中最好的例子莫过于加布里埃·奥

克了。在人物刻画中最有趣的是对村民群像的描写。他们每个人都保留了自己的个性，但似乎又具有一些共性。当他们对社会地位比他们"高"的人物发表见解时，其意见一致的程度就有如希腊合唱一般。另外，人物的刻画也有助于推动情节的发展，这种作用的最好例证就是派约瑟夫·普尔格拉斯去把范妮的尸体运回韦瑟伯里的一节。普尔格拉斯在鹿头酒店呆得时间太长，由此当他把尸体运回教堂墓地时天色已太晚，来不及掩埋了。这样，尸体就被运到芭思希芭的农场过夜，于是芭思希芭就有了打开棺材发现范妮的孩子的机会。

与这群乡下人有关的喜剧性的描写几乎是莎士比亚式的。哈代对书中最愚笨的人物(如普尔格拉斯)都充满了同情，从不嘲笑他们。尽管他讲故事时腼腼腆腆、结结巴巴，但他也能和大家一起凑趣取乐。当科根在剪羊毛节上逗普尔格拉斯唱《芭蕾舞曲》时，气氛也是欢快热烈的。

在写作技巧上，稍逊于他那乡村群像描写的是他曾多次运用的引喻手法。那多得不同寻常的对希腊、罗马古典文学和《圣经》的引用达到了令人惊讶的地步。其中效果最佳的是《圣经》的引用，因为它们几乎是那田园诗般背景的强有力的回声。芭思希芭这个人物名字的选用也是用意深远的。但把亚当对夏娃的一见钟情和博德伍德对芭思希芭的一见倾心相比则更使这一段增加了力度。然而，把芭思希芭和仙女或维纳斯相提并论就不那么巧妙了；把她和索尔、乔弗或西克鲁普斯相比就更显得苍白、乏力，甚至自相矛盾。

作品中文学方面的引用也不少，如加布里埃对芭思希芭最初的惊鸿一瞥被比作像弥尔顿的撒旦第一次见到天堂一样(典故出自《失乐园》)。另外，在描写加布里埃缺乏对芭思希芭表达爱意的技巧时，哈代又引用了《麦克白斯》中的一段。

《远离尘嚣》: 内容简介

家境殷实的农民加布里埃·奥克遇见了一位虽虚荣却漂亮的年轻姑娘芭思希芭·埃弗汀。他决定与其结婚但遭到了拒绝,因为她并不爱他,而且也没有打算结婚成家。他向她保证他会永远爱她,但从此不再提和她结婚的事。过了不久她的叔叔去世了,她继承了叔叔在韦瑟伯里的农场。她离开了诺柯姆。而加布里埃此时对爱情已心灰意冷,而且他也不知晓芭思希芭生活中的变化。他的羊群不幸掉到了石灰坑里。这使他在经济上遭受了惨痛的打击。他被迫卖掉了一切家产以偿还债务。

他没能找到管家或牧羊人这样的活儿干,于是转往韦瑟伯里镇,在那儿,他帮助一个农场扑灭了一场干草堆燃起的大火。他希望在这个农场得到一份放羊的工作,但令他惊讶的是这个农场的场主竟是芭思希芭。她雇他替她放羊。之后他去当地的麦芽作坊想找一住处。那里的村民热情地欢迎了他;当人们准备离开作坊时,有人带来消息说芭思希芭的管家因偷窃被主人开除了,另外,农场中最年轻的女仆范妮·罗宾突然失踪了。

芭思希芭决定自己经营管理农场,然后独自去卡斯特桥的谷物市场。在那里她由于受到另一个农场主博德伍德先生的轻视而感到气愤。博德伍德一直在附近的另一个农场里独身生活,而且以一名坚定的独身主义者而闻名。在一阵冲动之下,芭思希芭给他送去了一张匿名的情人卡,上面写着"请娶我"。博德伍德从加布里埃处得知这是芭思希芭的笔迹,这激发了他对芭思希芭的兴趣。他爱上了她。一天,当她和工人们一起为羊群洗澡时,他走过去向她求婚。

她拒绝了他的求婚。当他一次又一次地请求她接受时,她说再给

她一段时间考虑。她找到正在剪羊毛的加布里埃，征求他的意见。虽然加布里埃还深爱着她，但他诚恳地告诉她他不同意她这么做。芭思希芭被他的回答惹恼，一气之下要把他赶出农场。加布里埃答应立即离开。但就在次日，芭思希芭的羊群受了伤，她迫不得已又去求加布里埃。第一次他拒绝了她的要求，但后来他还是回来替她解救了羊群。这时芭思希芭请求他再也不要离开她。

与此同时，有人报告说范妮·罗宾和一个叫弗兰西斯·特罗伊的中士跑了，她跟着他跑到了新的营地，焦急地询问他们的婚事。他对这个计划好像有些迟疑不决，但他答应尽快再与她见面。

在韦瑟伯里农场，村民们聚集在一起帮着剪羊毛，剪完羊毛后他们举行了一场欢快的庆祝会，博德伍德以男主人的身份出现了。他又一次向她求婚，但她只是为她送出的那张愚蠢的情人卡向他道歉。这已是她送出卡五六周后的事了。

但是，当天晚上她意外地与特罗伊相遇，并被他的风度和仪表迷住了。在收干草的时候她又一次遇到了他，并暗自为他的赞赏陶醉。更有甚者，她痴情于他勇猛的剑术表演，完全不去面对他是个性情不定、徒有其表的家伙这一事实。加布里埃虽然深深地爱着她，但他还是试图提醒她当心特罗伊，并说即使与博德伍德结婚也会比与特罗伊结婚安全些。她见到博德伍德后坚决地拒绝了他，虽然她也同情他，并为自己所写的愚蠢的情人卡抱歉。当她讲出她爱上了特罗伊之后，博德伍德表示强烈的反对。芭思希芭跟着特罗伊到了巴思，提醒他提防博德伍德。当特罗伊暗示她还有一位漂亮姑娘也爱上了他时，出于留住他的心理，她立刻与他结了婚。

特罗伊与芭思希芭一起回到了韦瑟伯里农场。博德伍德自愿为特罗伊出钱，让他与范妮或芭思希芭结婚。这时，特罗伊把登有他与芭思希芭结婚的告示拿了出来，并把钱扔在了路上，博德伍德发誓说有朝一日要惩罚他。博德伍德看到报纸后的反应更增加了加布

里埃对这桩仓促婚事的失望和痛楚。博德伍德再也无心照料农场，以致坐看农场败落，自己也失去了生活的重心。

特罗伊举行晚宴和舞会庆祝丰收后的兴旺发达，而加布里埃发现有暴风雨的前兆，这将威胁芭思希芭的丰收成果。但特罗伊听不进他的提醒，坚持要农场所有的人都来通宵喝酒庆祝。加布里埃在芭思希芭的帮助之下把堆起的稻草盖了起来，并保护了庄稼。

范妮·罗宾又一次出现在故事中，这一次她用了最后一丝气力爬到了救济院门口，最后被人抬了出去，显然她病得很重。

芭思希芭开始怀疑自己的丈夫与范妮有染，并猜测着他们之间感情的深度。特罗伊知道范妮约他到卡斯特桥市见面。就在他去卡市的同一天，范妮的死讯传到芭思希芭耳中。出于同情，她派普尔格拉斯去把尸体运回来葬在教堂墓地中。普尔格拉斯在鹿头酒店耽搁得太久，当他把尸体运回时天色已经太晚，来不及埋葬了。这样范妮的尸体就被送回了她最后的家——韦瑟伯里农场——过夜。当晚，芭思希芭禁不住好奇心打开了棺材，她终于发现了加布里埃一直想瞒住她的的事实——范妮的身边还躺着她那刚刚出世就夭折了的婴儿的尸体。正在此时，特罗伊赶了回来，声称范妮对他比任何人都重要。他请人在范妮的墓上建了一块豪华的墓碑，并亲自在她的坟前种下了鲜花，但这些花却不幸被夜里下起的大雨冲走了。特罗伊离开了韦瑟伯里。虽然人们一直没有找到他的尸体，但大家都确信他是被淹死了。

博德伍德又一次向芭思希芭求婚，她最终同意了，虽然她要求再等上七年时间，等到能够确定特罗伊真的死了，或者有他的尸体的迹象时再说。博德伍德举行了一次圣诞晚会，他将在此宣布他们订婚的消息。就在这次晚会上，一个陌生人出现了。他就是特罗伊。他命令芭思希芭跟他一起回农场。就在她挣脱他的一瞬间，博德伍德开枪将他打死了。

博德伍德被判为谋杀罪，但在全体村民的一致请求下，他的死刑被改判为坐牢服刑。特罗伊和范妮被埋在了一起。芭思希芭慢慢地心身恢复了健康。加布里埃决定离开英国，并把他的计划告诉了芭思希芭。她突然意识到她是多么依赖他、他的爱对她又意味着什么。她对他的感情不像对特罗伊的爱那么强烈，但那是一种对他优秀品格的敬重之情。她记得他说过不会再提求婚之事，于是她到他的小木屋中请求他留下作她的丈夫。他理所当然地接受了她的请求；两人喜结良缘，过上了平静安宁的生活。

《远离尘嚣》：详细介绍

第一章
对农民奥克的描写——一次偶然相遇

对加布里埃·奥克的描写是以一种中性的基调开始的。他绝不是大多数小说中那种冲劲十足、打扮漂亮的男主角，而是社区中的一个既不过份显眼又不缺乏别人尊重的踏踏实实的年轻人。他的外表并不潇洒迷人，但是得体、稳重，给邻居的感觉是他人品可靠、有判断力，但又不是乏味、无个性的。尽管他为人纯朴、直率，却一点都不软弱。他显得很自尊、自信、冷静和成熟，这是超乎他那二十多岁年纪的。虽然在他那小小的农场他已经颇有成就，但他还是一个单身汉。

一天，他在田里干活时看到一辆四轮运货马车越过诺柯姆山的山嘴从公路上开了过来。那辆车色彩艳丽，上面装满了家用物品。车顶上坐着一位非常漂亮的姑娘，身穿一件鲜红的上衣。就在加布里埃凝神观看的时候，车夫把车停了下来，说是车的后档板掉了，他得跑回去把它找回来。

趁着这个功夫，那年轻姑娘打开了身边的一个包裹，看看四周没人，便打开合着的镜子花上几分钟认真地、满意地检查了一番自己的容貌。加布里埃发现她这么做根本没有必要，因为周围根本没有人。她只是欣赏自己镜中的模样，幻想自己是个人见人爱的美人儿。

车夫回来的时候，她把镜子又悄悄地塞回了包裹。车又开动了。加布里埃跟着车走了一段，看到那辆车停在了路税收费处门口。见那年轻姑娘不肯交给收费人多要的两便士，加布里埃便走过去替她付了那两便士，替她解了围。但她似乎不太领他的情，都不情

愿道谢一声，甚至为她失去了争吵的靶子气恼起来。车又继续前行了，加布里埃和那收费人就这姑娘聊了起来。收费人说她确实漂亮，但加布里埃说她身上有明显的缺点。收费人说这是“高傲”，但加布里埃又悲哀地加上了一句：“虚荣”。

评论： 小说是以加布里埃的出场开始的，也是以他的出现结束的。我们可以把他当作衡量书中的人物与事件的试金石。小说开头对他的描写就暗示了他在这方面的可靠性。他是个不显山不露水的年轻人，但他的观察力很敏锐，对身边所发生的事也很感兴趣。他对他人的兴趣可以从他对那姑娘远远地但充满兴趣地进行研究、并为她交纳了她所欠的那笔小小的税款两件事上表现出来。他冷静的洞察力和毫无浪漫色彩的气质使读者暗暗地把他的视角作为一个看问题时可信赖的视角。

第二章
夜晚——羊群——屋里——内心

第二章是以对诺柯姆村的一个寒冷的冬夜的描写和这种景色对一位观察者的影响开始的。假如一位陌生人独自造访这里的话，他不仅会被这里石灰和厚土覆盖的田埂所显示出的那份苍凉所震憾。天空仿佛格外深蓝，星星看起来格外明亮，像是离我们更近一些。突然，一种有别于大自然的声音传入我们耳中：那是加布里埃吹出的长笛声。

这笛声听上去有些沉闷，因为加布里埃是在他的牧羊小屋中吹笛子的，小屋很像是诺亚方舟的玩具模型，它是一个可移动的、在产羊羔季节为牧羊人提供的临时栖身之处，为的是便于他更好地照料羊群。

加布里埃最近才得到这些家畜和土地，成了一名自食其力的农民，

因此他特别关心羊群的产仔。他把全部的资金都投到了养羊的事业上,所以好好照料羊群和刚刚产下的小羊羔对他事业的成功就尤为重要,他也必须亲自照看他的羊群。他停止吹笛,起身去查看羊群。他把一只刚刚出生、需要特别护理的小羊羔抱进屋子,把它放在火堆旁暖和着,然后自己很快进入了梦乡。

小屋里的陈设很舒适,但相当简单:屋里没有窗户,只有两个洞口,上面是两块木板,用滑板撑起来透气。除了加布里埃的长笛和一些食物,屋子里其他的东西都是照看羊群用的。当那只火堆旁的小羊被暖过来发出"咩咩"的叫声时,加布里埃立即醒了过来。他把小羊抱回了羊群。他抬头望望天上的星星,想借星星的位置判断一下时间。在判断出已是深夜1点钟之后,他还是被夜空的美丽深深地吸引着。他发现远处有一片灯光,开始还以为是一颗星星的亮光呢。他向那灯光走去,发现那是建在山坡上的一间小木屋。从屋顶看过去(在那个角度,屋顶和地面一样高),他看到一位中年妇女在照料两头母牛,她身边还有一位披着长斗篷的年轻姑娘。一头母牛刚刚产下了一头小牛,另一头在吃谷糠饲料。年纪大些的那位妇女说,虽然她得深夜起来照顾这两头牛,但看到它们平安无事她也就安心了。那年轻的姑娘好像对牛的命运不太关心,她希望雇一个人来照料这些牲畜,又说风把她的帽子吹跑了。因为饲料用完了,她准备第二天一大早就骑马赶到碾谷厂,尽管年纪较大的妇女提醒她她们没有女人用的横马鞍了。

加布里埃对那年轻姑娘感到很好奇;他希望能看清她的脸,想像着她一定很漂亮。正在这时,姑娘的斗篷掉了,加布里埃认出来她就是那个坐在马车上照镜子的姑娘。两个女人把小牛犊放在母牛身边后,就拿起马灯离开了。加布里埃也回到了他的羊群处。

评论: 小说的前两章中动作比较少,哈代在这里铺设了小说中的乡村背景,而且还确立了通过英国乡村的自然世界衡量他的人物与情节的方法。在这个宁静、田园的背景之下(牧羊

是背景的中心),人们的生活远离城市的繁忙。只要与大自然保持真正亲密的关系,人们就有机会过上幸福的生活。加布里埃与大自然的亲密关系从小说的第一句话就表现出来了,哈代在小说的第一句话中把加布里埃比作正在升起的太阳;他的姓氏也暗示了他那橡树般持久与稳定的性格。虽然他把家中时常不准的那块表戴在身上,但除此之外他和机器一点都不沾边。他时常还得靠邻居家的钟表或靠天上星星的位置来确定时间。他在野外比在家里更自然、更舒适。他更合适作一个农民。

但他见到的那个姑娘却与他不同。她的表现与大自然背道而驰。她高傲、虚荣,只顾照镜子孤芳自赏,却对为她付了多余税款的加布里埃没有表示半点感激之情。她对养牛不感兴趣,但加布里埃却是亲自顾料他的小羊羔。他最终的成功都归功于他诚实的品质和与大自然亲密的关系。与之相反,那姑娘却因其高傲和与"真实"世界间的距离而好像注定要一辈子不幸,一辈子忍受痛苦。

第三章
马背上的姑娘——一次谈话

第二天天刚亮,奥克在一片山毛榉树丛中的小河沟里发现了那姑娘的帽子。他把它带回自己的小屋,等着正向他骑马奔来的姑娘。她四下看看,见没人,便平躺在马背上,闪过路两旁和她一样高的树枝,然后骑马向特耐尔的碾谷厂奔去。奥克对她杂技般的马术颇为赞叹,他把她的帽子挂在小屋等她回来。那姑娘回来时手里拎着一只牛奶桶向牛棚走去。加布里埃在路边等着把帽子还给她。当她看到从树篱后突然出现的加布里埃时吓了一跳,但他却能仔细地看到她了。她身上散发出的是一种乡村少女纯朴的美。当加布里埃盯着她看时,那姑娘一点儿都不慌乱,照样神情自若、沉着冷静。倒是他先红了脸。她收下了帽子,并说她知道他是谁。

当他告诉她他看见她去碾谷厂的情景时，她意识到他一定看到她在马上的滑稽动作了，于是也红了脸。加布里埃比她还尴尬，他有意识地侧过脸，好让她恢复平静。但当他再转过脸来时，她已经走了。

五天之后，她像往常一样到牛棚挤奶。她没有去找加布里埃，而且好像对他的不善言辞感到有些气恼。加布里埃也后悔不该介入她的隐私。一个冰天雪地的下午，他一直特别关注着牛棚那边的动静。当他回到自己的小屋时，为了使屋子暖和些便关上了那两个通气口，并很快睡着了，他没有想到这样会使人窒息。当他醒来时，他发现那姑娘正在抢救他。他抱怨说这小屋不安全，但她提醒他说这主要是因为他不该关上那两个通风口。她告诉他，是他的狗把她带到这里的。他对她的救命之恩表示感谢，而她为了戏弄他一下便没有留下姓名，然后就走了。

评论： 年轻姑娘跃马扬鞭向碾谷厂奔驰的情景是她热爱自由、个性独立的绝好的例证。她那娴熟的马术是"假小子"式的，它也表现了她对传统生活方式的不屑。在这样美丽的景色中跃马奔驰，这本身也显示出她那年轻人的朝气与乐趣。

这位年轻姑娘从未感觉到她应该感谢加布里埃，为他在收费处门口解了她的围，或者为他替她找回了帽子，但是她回报的方式却远远超过了这一切——她挽救了他的性命。但不足的是她一直在和他开玩笑，笑他握住了她的手，戏弄他，不告诉他自己的姓名，这些都破坏了小屋中安详宁静的气氛。

第四章
加布里埃的决心——登门拜访——一个错误

加布里埃对那年轻姑娘的热情悄悄地、却实实在在增长着。他终于得知她叫芭思希芭·埃弗汀，并且得知她和她的姑妈住在附近的

一间农舍中。他喜欢一遍又一遍地念叨她的名字。苦于不能把对她的感情用语言表达出来，他只能默默地注视着她。但她对他的感情却毫无察觉。他每天花上好几个钟头想她，最后终于决定去向她求婚。他痛恨牛奶被挤光的日子，因为那时她就不会到牛棚里来了。如果她几天不来，他就会想一个什么借口去她姑妈家找她。

当他发现一头母羊死了之后，他找到了一个很好的借口，那就是把失去妈妈的小羊羔当作宠物送给芭思希芭。他挑了个睛朗的日子，精心、体面地打扮好之后就出门了。走近她家时，他的狗开始追赶灌木丛后她家的猫。加布里埃听到一个女人安抚猫的声音。他护卫着他的狗，却再没有听到回音。他不知道刚才说话的是不是芭思希芭，担心这个不巧的小插曲会影响他的求婚。

当他见到她姑妈时感到很难为情。她告诉他芭思希芭不在家。加布里埃请求她只告诉芭思希芭刚才"有人"来过就行了。他告诉她他准备向芭思希芭求婚，并向其询问芭思希芭有多少追求者。姑妈告诉他有几个年轻人对她侄女很感兴趣。加布里埃暗自为自己条件的"一般"感到内疚，但他觉得还有一丝希望，因为他是第一位求婚者。他决定不再等芭思希芭了，于是起身回家。这时芭思希芭从后面追了上来，她告诉他，姑妈说的关于她不在家、她有许多追求者的话都是假的。高兴得不知如何是好的加布里埃认定她这是在鼓励他，于是试着去握她的手，但她却把手藏在了身后。他答应她要在农场加倍干活儿，只要能使她高兴，他做什么都愿意。但加布里埃误解了芭思希芭追来的目的，她只是想让他知道她并不是那么高不可攀。如果她想让他向自己求婚，她会告诉他的，但她暂时还被外面的大千世界所迷惑。他向她保证他会给她一生的幸福，她会有一架钢琴(他会吹起笛子和她一起演奏)、一辆双轮轻便马车，还会有满院的花草、鸡鸭。他甚至会把他们结婚的消息登在当地的报纸上(而且以后每生一个孩子都将如此)。虽然她会喜欢当新娘，但婚姻生活，特别是和一个她并不爱的丈夫在一起的婚姻

生活，却不能吸引她。

她并不是无情无意，她告诉他，尽管他这么爱她，她还是不能和他结婚，她很遗憾。她现在后悔追了出来，她安慰他说她受的教育比他多，如果他娶一个富家女儿，他很快就会发达起来，因为毕竟他只是个年轻的农民。他同意她的说法，娶个富太太对他来讲的确是一个实际的选择，但他爱的是她。当他再次提出求婚时，她又拒绝了。他向她保证他对她的爱情至死不变，但以后再也不会向她提求婚的事了。

评论： 在这一章中，芭思希芭的一个重要的缺点暴露出来了：她自私地想要别人爱她，但却不想对别人做出任何奉献，也不想对任何人认真地承诺什么。她冲动之下追他出来的举动暗示出她在大事上会不顾后果地任性行事。

哈代在表现加布里埃的许诺时运用了反语手法。只有到了书的结尾处，当芭思希芭想起了他的这个许诺，她自己必须去向他求婚时，这个许诺才有了个交待。芭思希芭因此举降低了身份，但她却因此变成了一个幸福快乐的妇人。

第五章
芭思希芭的出走——乡村的悲剧

这个时期，加布里埃的经济状况到了最差的程度。他发现芭思希芭已经离开了她姑妈的农庄，但他却不知道她去了什么地方。她突然的不辞而别比她口头的拒绝对他的打击更大。他对她难以忘怀。在她出走后，这爱的火焰一直熊熊燃烧着。但她的离去也没有使他把她过分理想化。他和芭思希芭的姑妈只是初识，不便从她那儿得到芭思希芭更多的消息。他间接地了解到她去了韦瑟伯里(大约二英里路以外)，但不知她是否在那儿常住。

更糟的是厄运又降临到了他的农场，这是由于他的一只新牧羊犬缺乏经验造成的。他的那只名叫乔治的牧羊犬年纪太大了，因此加布里埃想用他养的一群小狗中的一只把老牧羊犬替换下来。这只狗认为它的职责就是赶着羊群不停地跑。一天夜里，羊群奔跑得太快，撞破了一个石灰坑四周的围栏。加布里埃被一阵猛烈急促的羊铃声惊醒。他急忙起身，出来一看，二百多只怀有身孕的母羊全部摔到了石灰坑底下，有的已经死了，还有的奄奄一息。他是用赊帐的方式置办这个农场的，这么一来，他全部的投资就化为乌有了。但是他脑海里出现的第一个念头是可怜那些死去的母羊，特别是那些还未来得及出世的小羊羔。他庆幸在灾难降临之前他没有和芭思希芭结婚。加布里埃卖掉了他其余的家产、农具和土地来还帐，最后他除了身上的衣服就变得一无所有了。

评论： 加布里埃坦然、勇敢地接受了双重的失败。他面对困难的反应使读者清楚地看到了他高尚的品格。此外，从见到死去的羊群加布里埃的第一反应中——即对动物的怜悯，也体现出他与大自然之间的关系。他没有先因为经济上的损失而痛心，对死去的羊群的悲伤以及没有牵连到芭思希芭的欣慰首先占据了他的心灵。他那彻底的无私精神与芭思希芭的只顾自己的行为形成了鲜明的对照，这一点在前一章已经展示出来了。

第六章
集市——在路上——大火

两个月以后，加布里埃出现在了卡斯特桥的求职市场上。约有两三百名手拿职业标志的人们（如牧羊人手执牧羊杖），等着找如赶车的、盖房的、放牧的一类工作。加布里埃并没有被他的灾难打垮，他依然信心十足地希望找到一个管家的差事，但此时好像牧羊人的需要量很大，于是，他从铁匠那里买了一支牧羊杖，又把自己的衣服和一位牧羊人掉换了一下。但这时好像管家的工作又抢手

了。两三个对加布里埃感兴趣的农场主在得知他本人也曾经是个养羊的农场主之后就都走开了。一直到下午,加布里埃还是没有找到工作,但他没有失望,而是快乐地吹起了笛子。他吹笛子挣了几便士,之后听说离韦瑟伯里五六英里外的肖茨福德还有一个求职市场。因为知道韦瑟伯里那个地方的人快活又有趣,加布里埃决定在去肖茨福德之前在韦瑟伯里先过一夜。

他大约往前走了三四英里路,直到天色暗下来。这时,他发现路上有一辆明显是被人丢弃的马车,他决定在这辆马车里过夜以省下住宿的钱。他先吃了一些面包、火腿和苹果汁当晚饭,然后就在铺着稻草的马车里睡了起来。醒来时,他发现马车在动。此时已是晚上9点钟左右(这是他从天上星星的位置判断出来的)。加布里埃听到有两个人正坐在马车的前座上说话(这是比利·斯莫伯里和普尔格拉斯),他们正在谈论他们那位骄傲的女农场主。加布里埃好奇地想,这会不会是芭思希芭,但又转念一想这只不过是乱猜罢了。他不想到城里去,于是就从马车上溜下来,他宁愿在田里过夜。不料,他看到远处半英里以外有一片不同寻常的亮光,他断定那一定是着火了。他穿过田野,向那片火光奔去,发现是一堆稻草着火了。那堆稻草已快被烧光了,但附近还有一堆麦秸和干草也有被烧着的危险,形势非常紧急。那些赶来救火的人看到这阵势都惊慌失措了。加布里埃赶过去指挥救火,他组织好了工人,自己也奋力扑救。这一切被一位年轻女人远远地看在眼里,她向别人打听这牧羊人是谁,并让人带话感谢他。加布里埃想找个牧羊人的活儿干,他向工人们打听他们的主人是谁,工人们告诉他这座农场是由一个年轻女人继承她死去的叔叔的遗产而来的。虽然加布里埃浑身又湿又脏,但他还是按照工人们指给他的方向匆匆地向那女农场主走去。他问她是否需要一个牧羊人。当她把面纱揭起时,他又一次见到了芭思希芭。他又谦恭地向她重复了一遍他的要求。

评论: 在这部小说里,哈代至少在两处运用了悬念的手法,

隐瞒了芭思希芭的身份。这种手法是由威尔基·科林斯的使用而出名的(他就是《月亮宝石》和《白衣女人》的作者)。在哈代写作初期,这些小说就是指定的阅读范例。

虽然加布里埃经历了爱情上的失败和经济上的损失,但是透过他求职市场吹笛子的一幕,我们仍能感受到他人格的力量。他吹出的乐曲不仅给他带来了急需的几便士,并且使他初来乍到就成为韦瑟伯里远近欢迎的人物。

第七章
相认——一位腼腆的女孩

这次相见使他们两人都很尴尬;芭思希芭对他俩身份和处境的改变感到既惋惜又骄傲。她的确需要牧羊人,所有的村民都异口同声地说他是最好的人选。她把加布里埃派到管家那里,并答应为工人们准备一些点心送到麦芽作坊里去。当加布里埃向管家问起住处时,管家让他去麦芽作坊,并说那儿的人会帮他的。在去麦芽作坊的路上,加布里埃回想他和芭思希芭的这次奇特的会面,还有她的新身份。走到教堂墓地时,他看见一个衣着不整的女孩,于是向她问去麦芽作坊的路。他隐约感到这女孩有什么麻烦,她不但没有答复他的问题,反而向他打听鹿头酒店开到几点。加布里埃新来乍到,无法回答她。她请求他过几天才告诉别人遇到她这件事。她在冷风中颤抖时,加布里埃同情地将自己身上的最后一个便士给了她,然后向韦瑟伯里走去。他知道这女孩肯定有麻烦,也看出她心情不好,因为她的脉搏跳得像被吓坏的小羊羔一样,但他也帮不了她什么忙。

评论: 对于加布里埃在去麦芽作坊的路上碰到的这个女孩,哈代又一次隐去了她的身份,使读者产生了好奇。这位"戴面纱的女人"的身份直到下一章结尾才暴露出来。

加布里埃与生俱来的豪爽之气通过他把自己最后一便士与她分享的举动体现了出来。他意识到她有麻烦，并愿意帮助她，但由于她是个胆怯、自卑的姑娘，也由于他新来乍到，他猜不出她的难处。哈代在小说的后面又利用了这个细节。见加布里埃对她如此热心，她便给他写了一封信致谢，并在信中透露了一些她的处境。

第八章
麦芽作坊——愉快的交谈——惊人的消息

麦芽作坊是一间常春藤色的草舍，石板铺地，中央是一座椭圆形的火炉，四周摆着一把带扶手的高背椅和一些长凳，这是为喝酒的人准备的。这里的老酿酒师早已过了耄耋之年。当加布里埃走进作坊时，大家一起向他问候。老酿酒师告诉他，他听说过加布里埃一家，还认识诺柯姆村的其他一些人。他为加布里埃叫了一大杯干净的啤酒，但加布里埃坚持说带有草灰的啤酒杯子对他就很好了。这样，他就成了村民中受欢迎的新成员。大家纷纷向他自报家门：他们中有亨利·韦雷(他自称亨尼利)、快乐的简·科根、性情随和的马克·克拉克、老酿酒师的儿子雅克布·斯莫伯里，还有生性腼腆的约瑟夫·普尔格拉斯。

在村民们给他讲了普尔格拉斯胆小怕事的一些笑话之后，大家静了一会儿。加布里埃打破了这种宁静，问起了这个农场和它的新主人的情况，但他发现村民们总是东一句西一句地聊什么法默·埃弗汀和他的家庭，或聊村子里过去的掌故，他根本不能使他们把话题集中在他的问题上。关于芭思希芭的过去，他得知甚少。(只听说她小时候并不很漂亮。)村民们说这座农场大部分时候是由管家来经营的，这个管家人好像又不太本分。加布里埃变换了话题，开始谈论老酿酒师的年纪。而老酿酒师对此不太热心，他讲了讲自己的过去，并说他也不太清楚自己的年龄，但肯定自己有一百多岁了。

大家传着喝酒时，亨尼利注意到了加布里埃的笛子，并认出他就是在求职市场上吹笛子的那个人。加布里埃承认他缺钱用，但村民们并没有因为他的贫穷而嫌弃他，并请他吹上一曲。他吹了起来，直到拉班·塔尔鼓掌称赞为止（拉班·塔尔这个人物基本上没有什么个性，人们一直把他称作“苏珊·塔尔的丈夫”）。村民们看加布里埃是个聪明伶俐之人，于是很高兴让他成为自己中的一员。塔尔起身回家了，其余的人也随之散去。这时，亨尼利匆匆赶来送信儿，说管家因偷东西被开除了。芭思希芭在他偷半袋大麦时当场将他抓住，之后又查出农场至少还丢失了五袋粮食。她答应如果他立刻离开就不去告他。之后，塔尔又带来了新消息：那个叫范妮·罗宾的，农场中年龄最小的女仆也失踪了。有人猜测她是自杀了，还有人说她是和一个当兵的人跑了。村民们马上赶回农场，分头去找范妮。加布里埃思考了一下当晚的事，决定去诺柯姆村，把自己的其他东西搬到农场来。

评论： 这一章妙就妙在它的喜剧色彩上。大家讲的故事本身就很有趣。另外，老酿酒师和另一个村民没完没了地讲，加布里埃在一边耐心地伺机打听芭思希芭，这情景更增添了喜剧色彩。

哈代在这里大致勾勒了一幅人物群像，使读者对每个人都有了一些印象（不可能太详细）。作者大多采取描写每个人与众不同的特点来实现这一点（如普尔格拉斯的胆小怕事、科根喝酒时爱和别人共用一个杯子）。然而，尽管他们各不相同，这却是一个极其和谐的整体（特别是由于他们与过去的紧密联系），每个人都和这个整体息息相关。

从这章让人欲罢不能的结尾，我们不难看出小说当年章回连载的痕迹，在这章里我们还看到了范妮失踪的轰动性新闻。维多利亚时代的读者肯定会迫切想读到下期的《康希尔》杂志，看看结局如何，同时也想看看加布里埃会不会取代芭思希

芭的管家。

第九章
家宅——来访者——知心话

韦瑟伯里农庄被描绘成文艺复兴时期的古典建筑,后来旁边又加盖了一些其他风格的建筑。府邸的正中原是座大厅,从墙上的青苔上不难看出它历史久远。房子的正面庄严肃穆,但好像很少用来出入,倒是后门常有管理农场事务的人员进进出出。

芭思希芭和莉迪正在整理芭思希芭去世的叔叔留下来的各种文件和资料,这时一位绅士从前门走了进来。他通报说自己是博德伍德先生,邻家农场的主人,但芭思希芭叫人传话说她不在家。她觉得自己太不体面,又抽不出身来,不想见他。他来是为了看看有没有范妮·罗宾的消息。芭思希芭问莉迪他是谁(自从芭思希芭来了之后莉迪身份已不太像个外人了,而是一个伙伴和亲信),莉迪说他是出钱送范妮去上学并给她在庄园里找了份活儿干的那个人。人们都说他是个坚定的独身主义者。科根的小儿子说博德伍德给了他一便士让他给开门,并向他询问芭思希芭的事。芭思希芭取笑一名女佣没有嫁人。莉迪问起芭思希芭有没有人向她求过婚,她神秘地暗示了加布里埃,并说这个年轻人配不上她。他们的谈话被进来的工人们打断了。

评论: 从对农场府邸的描绘,还有从这些建筑学术语上(如尖顶饰和虫蛀纹),我们可以看出哈代在建筑方面的知识背景。

从博德伍德第一次想结识芭思希芭起,他的努力就被各种误解与不幸所阻。如果芭思希芭愿意见见她的这位邻居,那么她对他的好奇心就会很快得到满足;如果博德伍德见到芭思希芭,她给他的印象就不会那么有破坏作用。或许他那通情

达理、含蓄内向的性情会不喜欢她那年轻人的急躁、冲动，但正因为不认识她，她的冷漠才在他心目中变成了一种浪漫的象征。

芭思希芭拒绝加布里埃的求婚，这证明她是个骄傲、自私的年轻姑娘。她从未认真研究过他的品质，他的求婚遭到拒绝仅仅因为他与她不门当户对。

第十章
女农场主与众农人

半小时后，芭思希芭行使了农场主的权力，她给干活儿的人发了工资，并宣布管家被开除了，她准备自己管理农场。有人送来了范妮的消息：纽米尔池塘已被打捞过了；也派人去卡斯特桥去找过了。（加布里埃也悄悄到鹿头酒店打听过范妮的消息了。）亨尼利极力劝说芭思希芭把农场交给他管理，但遭到芭思希芭的强烈拒绝。由于加布里埃需要一名助手，有人推荐凯尼·贝尔，加布里埃接受了。（此人原名艾贝尔，人们一直错把他叫成凯尼·贝尔。）芭思希芭对加布里埃说话时态度很严肃，因为她想确立她的新地位。这时比利·斯莫伯里从卡斯特桥回来了，他说范妮已经和第十一重骑兵队的一个士兵私奔了，他不知道那人的姓名，只知道他大概是个中士。芭思希芭把这消息派人送到博德伍德家里，并向人们宣布了自己的新身份。最后她像皇后般骄傲地走出了屋子，而莉迪也下意识地跟着女主人，大摇大摆地走了出去。

评论： 芭思希芭现在快乐极了，人人都敬畏她的新地位、新权势。但哈代在这里通过描写莉迪的装腔作势、煞有其事的样子，对她的骄傲与虚荣进行了讽刺，因为这正是她的主人的写照。

第十一章
营房外——雪地——一次约会

在一个漆黑的雪夜，一个瘦小的身影走近了韦瑟伯里北边的一个小城里驻扎的军营。这里的景色荒凉孤寂，唯一能够听到的声音就是隐隐约约的教堂钟声。这是个年轻女人，她(不很熟练地)往一个窗户上扔了个雪球，最后她终于击中了那扇窗户，并且引起了屋里人的注意。她向里面的人打听特罗伊中士，那人说他就是。她在外边说她是范妮·罗宾。听了这话，他很吃惊：她竟然跟了他这么远。当她问起他是否准备和她结婚时，他摆出了一些困难(如她需要的一些衣服，得获得一张特别许可证，他还得征得长官的同意，等等)。她对他事先没有得到许可证而感到失望，但他说他并没想到她会到这儿来。她约他在退尔太太的公寓见面。离开之前，房间里传来一阵笑声，但因为听不太清，她也许根本没有听到。

评论： 范妮在书中总是独自出现，这是个有趣的现象。她好像除了特罗伊以外就没有别的朋友了。在她出现的几场中，她要么是在到处找他，要么是在等着见他。哈代对她这种形单影孤的处境总是给予一些特别的同情。

第十二章
村民——规矩——例外

到了下一个集日，芭思希芭以农场主的新身份第一次在卡斯特桥的谷市上出现了。她是市场上唯一的女性，所以对自己为给别人留下什么印象、别人将如何接受她而感到有些紧张。她想她应该做一个成功的务实的商人，于是她开始自信、沉着地和别人讲话。她那既务实又不失女性风范的态度和周围男性的粗野之态形成了对比，因此更受到人们的欢迎。只有一个男人盛气十足，对她的魅力不以为然。这个是个中年绅士，而且芭思希芭猜测他还是单身

汉。集市散后，芭思希芭与莉迪一起回家，路上她问起这个与众不同的男人是谁。得知莉迪对此也一无所知时，她不禁为莉迪的消息闭塞而恼火，可是当这个男人从她们身边路过时，莉迪一下子就认出这是博德伍德先生。有人说他以前在爱情方面受过挫折，芭思希芭也愿意相信他一直独身是为了这么一个浪漫的理由，而不愿相信人们传说的另一个更现实的原因，那就是他天性就自我抑制、行为拘紧，对女人从未发生过兴趣。

评论： 芭思希芭长久渴望被人尊敬和崇拜的愿望终于在集市上得到了满足。她（作为那里唯一的女性）成了众人注意的焦点，而且对于她所受到的欢迎也心存感激。但她并不满足于公众对她的这种逢迎的态度，她对另一个农场主对她的冷淡恨之入骨。（我们事后得知这人正是博德伍德先生。）

他冷淡、含蓄的态度惹恼了她，但如果他去她府上拜访时受到欢迎的话，就不会有现在的冷淡之态了。博德伍德确实有一种神秘莫测、拒人以千里之外的神情，她用自己小姑娘的心理把它解释成了一次不幸的爱情失败的结果。

第十三章
密室游戏——瓦伦丁节的瓦伦丁

2 月 13 日，芭思希芭和莉迪坐在一起聊天，莉迪建议芭思希芭用圣经和钥匙来测算她未来的丈夫。看起来这是一种古老的游戏，因为从《圣经》中《路德记》中一页上的斑斑锈迹来看，用它来玩这个游戏已经有很多次了。芭思希芭把《圣经》翻来翻去，但书中并没有提示给她任何年轻人的名字。莉迪注意到芭思希芭的脑子里有博德伍德这个名字。看到芭思希芭给小特迪·科根写了一张情人卡，她就建议芭思希芭把它送给博德伍德。芭思希芭用了这样一种办法来决定去不去送这个情人卡，虽然这办法有点有悖常理：她把一本赞美诗集扔到空中，看它掉下来时是张开的还是合上的。

书掉下时是合上的，于是芭思希芭在信封上写上了博德伍德的名字，粘好信封，并在上面写上“请娶我”三个字，之后她就把信发了。

评论： 尽管芭思希芭以往的行为一直是放荡任性，但她一直没有为她的行为付出任何代价。至多这个情人卡是个不高明的玩笑，但至此她的好运就到头了，命运开始惩罚她。以往，她的行为只涉及到她一个人，但现在她却以玩弄别人的感情为乐趣，所以她也必须为此承受痛苦了。

第十四章
信的效应——太阳升起之时

博德伍德看到情人卡非常惊异，他仔细地研究它，好像在问它的到来到底意味着什么。黄昏到来之前他一直把它放在壁炉架上，上床睡觉前他又把它放在卧室中镜子的一角。他对它一直不能忘怀，因为它的到来引起了他感情上的一场波澜。他反反复复地思索着，试图猜出是谁写给他的。这些问题甚至在梦中还萦绕着他。天亮时外面黎明的景色好像格外清新，但博德伍德的心中只有那张情人卡，对身边其他的东西他一概视而不见。

邮车来了，邮差交给他一封信，但那是写给加布里埃的。他看到加布里埃在远处路上走着，于是就准备把信给他送去。加布里埃正朝麦芽作坊走去，博德伍德跟在他后面也向那里走去。

评论： 博德伍德的平静与沉默还从未被打破过，他那长久以来被抑制的、甚至几乎已经被忘却的感情开始复苏了。他以前对女性没什么兴趣，这倒不是因为她们对他没有表现出兴趣。这张情人卡所带有的淡淡的一层神秘色彩更使他激动不已：他迫切想查出这个给他情人卡的人是谁。

博德伍德的性格在慢慢起着变化，他精神上的平衡也渐渐被

打破，他必须慢慢改变他的性情和行为方式。但具有讽刺意味的是，他是唯一拿这张情人卡这么当真而且深受感动的人。

第十五章
早上的会面——又一封信

老酿酒师正在吃有面包和咸肉的早餐，亨尼利、穆恩、普尔格拉斯和其他车夫们也凑了过来。他们议论起芭思希芭没有了管家如何管理农场的事。亨尼利觉得如果让芭思希芭来经营农场，她非把事情弄得一团糟不可，但他的话里显然带有一种怨言，那就是没让他当管家。大家都批评她骄傲、虚荣，但对她的聪明和教养都交口称赞。过了一会儿，大家又议论起芭思希芭买钢琴和把叔叔留下的家具都换成更豪华的那种的举动。这时，浑身洋溢着朝气与活力的加布里埃抱着四只新生的小羊羔走了进来。他和凯尼忙了一整夜，照料母羊和新生的小羊。因为没有小羊圈，他来问问，看能不能把小羊放在这里的火炉旁，好使他们暖和、健壮起来。老酿酒师先是回忆起了诺柯姆村的事，然后话题又回到了芭思希芭身上。加布里埃挥着拳头警告大家，如果有谁敢讲芭思希芭的坏话，那么他就对这人毫不客气。

加布里埃的资历经受住了检验，同时他也得到了人们的敬重。大家一致认为他聪明能干(特别是他有靠星星判断时间的本领)，又有干农活的技术，是当管家的最佳人选。他承认自己愿意当这个管家，也会是个称职的管家，但他也会支持芭思希芭以她自己的方式经营农场。对于他受到了不公正的待遇的说法他予以了反驳。

博德伍德走进来，交给加布里埃一封范妮·罗宾写给他的信。她感谢他对她的帮助，并告诉他她要和弗兰克·特罗伊结婚了。博德伍德告诉了大家特罗伊的身世：他是贵族家庭的私生子，受过良好的教育，在卡斯特桥市当过一家律师事务所的职员，但他现在应征入伍了，并且似乎已经毁掉了他原本会有的大好前程。

凯尼带来消息说又有两只母羊生了双胞胎。加布里埃起身要回到羊群中去。走之前,他用芭思希芭名字的开头字母在他带来的四只小羊羔身上做了记号。博德伍德也急忙跟着加布里埃走了出去。他终于鼓足勇气向加布里埃开口求教,问他是否认得那张匿名的情人卡上的笔迹出自谁人之手。加布里埃认出那是芭思希芭的笔迹,而且意识到这一定是她用匿名的方式写给博德伍德让他猜的。博德伍德竭力想轻松地把他的注意力从这个问题上移开,但只要看一眼他那备受折磨的脸,任何幽默就都会失效了。他后悔把自己的隐私透露给了一个陌生人,于是独自回到家中,把情人卡放在壁炉架上,又琢磨起送卡人的用意来了。

评论: 从博德伍德向加布里埃询问情人卡的举动,我们可以看出他性格在慢慢地转变。他原本根本不会向一个陌生人提起这种隐私,但这张情人卡激发了他的情感,使他不顾一切地做出了这样的举动。

范妮出于感谢之情给加布里埃写了那封信,这推动了情节的发展,使读者认识到范妮的私奔是既成事实,但结婚并不是什么有把握的事。哈代在小说中很少一次性地利用故事情节,这一节就很好地证实了他用一个情节引出另一个情节的写作技巧。

第十六章
万圣教堂与万灵教堂

周日布道即将结束时,万圣教堂里的人们惊奇地看到一个身穿红色制服的年轻军人沿着过道大步走来。他的到来引起了人们的好奇心,于是他们想等到弄明白军人的这次不同寻常的来访的目的再离开。代理牧师和军人简单地交谈了几句,然后牧师和他的太太被叫到了教堂的台阶上。

大家纷纷议论说这里将举行一个婚礼。但时钟敲响 11 点半时新娘还没露面。时间一分一秒地过去,军人明显地变得越来越难堪,他紧张地立正站着,一动不动。

在漫长的等待中,大家开始交头接耳,甚至咯咯咯地笑起来。但当 12 点的钟声敲响时,教堂里却是一片鸦雀无声了,助理牧师和执士都离开了教堂。军人终于转向好奇的人群,然后果断地大步走出了教堂。

当他走过教堂外广场的小路时,他碰见了一个年轻姑娘。她向他打招呼时显然既沮丧而又惊恐不安。她去错了教堂,到万灵教堂去等他了。她问婚礼能不能第二天再举行,但是他为她的错误感到难堪与恼怒至极,声称很长时间之内他都不能再忍受一次这样的经历了。当她请求他原谅并询问他们什么时候再举行婚礼时,他只咕哝了一句:"天知道!"

> **评论:** 特罗伊是用嘲讽的语气说"天知道!"这句话的,但在小说的后面,他这句不经意的话语的悲剧性结果在他身上应验了。特罗伊筹办这次婚礼的举动值得称道,用博德伍德的话来说,他这种负责的举动超出任何人的想像范围。他对待惊恐得不知所措的范妮的态度决非友善,但哈代使特罗伊为他粗鲁的态度懊悔不已。
>
> 哈代对横在人们头上的、控制人类命运的天意的理解在可怜的范妮去错教堂这件事上表现出来。两个教堂的名字非常相似,但就是这一字之差导致了范妮最后的痛苦,也引出了小说后来发生的一切。

第十七章
集市上

星期六，博德伍德看到芭思希芭走进了卡斯特桥的集市。从上次在这儿见到她后，博德伍德的感情发生了惊天动地的变化。他以前不把她放在眼里，但出于对那张情人卡的好奇心他开始仔细地观察、研究她。他觉得她挺漂亮，但又不能十分肯定，因为集市上的男人对待她的态度都比较随便。他向一位邻居问起芭思希芭算不算漂亮。当得到肯定的回答时，他很高兴自己的眼光没有错。他纳闷芭思希芭为什么会做出送他情人卡这样的怪事，也急于想了解她对他到底有没有兴趣。

当他看到芭思希芭在和一个年轻的农民说话时，他感到嫉妒，并且特别想打断他们的谈话。芭思希芭知道博德伍德在注意她，一种抓住了他的注意力的胜利感油然升起。她几乎不把博德伍德当作丈夫的人选来认真考虑，也出自内心地为自己送他情人卡的愚蠢举动而懊悔。她决定第二天再见到他时向他道歉，但转念一想，道歉和先前的玩笑一样，都不是什么明智之举。如果他认为她是在捉弄他，道歉会给他带来更大的伤害；如果他认真了，他就会把她的道歉看作是引起他注意的另一个例证。

评论： 博德伍德不顾一切地想得到芭思希芭是由两件事引起的：一是他那次不成功的拜访，二是她的那张愚蠢的情人卡。他不太了解这位芳邻，对女人的事更知之甚少，他甚至得向别的男人请教她是不是算得上漂亮。

哈代对《圣经》中亚当对夏娃的一见倾心的引用是对这件事最好的评注。和亚当一样，博德伍德被这个新夏娃出卖了，但不同于亚当的是，博德伍德只对天堂窥视了一眼，从未真正享受过它。

第十八章
沉思中的博德伍德——悔恨

博德伍德是远近邻里中备受欢迎的成员，他的绅士风度使他既能接近村中的贵族阶层，又能接近乡绅地主一类人。他以佃农的身份在小韦瑟伯里农场过着单身的生活；他的良种马群可以证实他家道富裕。喂完马后，博德伍德在牲口棚旁踱来踱去，思考问题，一直到天黑。

博德伍德表面上是个沉默寡言的人，但实际上他只是非常善于控制自己的感情罢了。一旦他平静的生活被外界的力量扰乱，他就会采取激烈的行动。他缺乏幽默感，常常显得很严肃。芭思希芭送给他情人卡时根本没有意识到它会给像他这样的人带来什么后果。

一个春日的清晨，当羊群都被放出去吃草的时候，博德伍德从平坦的田野向芭思希芭的农场望去，看到芭思希芭和加布里埃、凯尼·贝尔在一起。他一认出芭思希芭，脸上就立刻流露出内心的感情。他想过去和她说说话。他长期远离爱情的生活结束了，他再也抑制不住了。

芭思希芭和加布里埃正在忙着给一只母羊所生的双胞胎中的一只找一位新母亲，这位母亲失去了自己的小羊，正好可以收养这只小羊。芭思希芭一抬头，看见博德伍德正站在门口，她的脸一下子就红了。加布里埃发现了芭思希芭表情的变化，也转过身去看来访者。他意识到他俩的这次见面和芭思希芭的那张情人卡有关。她准是在以什么方式玩弄博德伍德的感情。

博德伍德看出这两个人都意识到了他的出现，他自己却不知所措、腼腆得不敢开口了。他一向不善于追求女孩子，在爱情与求婚方

面的经验不足使他迟疑不决，不知她会有什么反应。

与之相反，芭思希芭却认定博德伍德是无事不登三宝殿。她为他对自己的特别关注而烦恼，决定不能再以任何方式鼓励他了。但是，她那愚蠢行为的后果无疑已经不可挽回地出现了。

评论： 哈代放慢了小说进展的速度，为的是更准确地刻画博德伍德这个人物。我们应该记住一个重要的线索，那就是博德伍德看起来是个很冷静、自制能力很强的人，但一旦失去这种控制他就会采取激烈的行动。如果我们回忆起他在收到这张情人卡之前一直严格地控制着自己的感情这个前提的话，那么他对芭思希芭突然迸发的情感就不难解释了，正是这张情人卡打开了他感情的闸门。

第十九章
洗理羊毛——求婚

最后，博德伍德还是去拜访了芭思希芭，但她没在家。因为自己也是个农场主，他明白芭思希芭作为农场的管理者生活非常繁忙，很少有时间参加社交活动。没有见到她反而使她的形象在他脑子里更理想化了。到了 5 月底，他决定要弄明白她对他的感情。

他到农场找她的时候，人们告诉他她在一个圆的盆形水池旁给羊群洗理羊毛。包括加布里埃在内的几个工人正赶着羊群蹚过水池，洗掉它们贵重的羊毛上的脏东西。这是个绝好的春日，草坪和树木好像比往日更加翠绿。芭思希芭身穿一套崭新的骑装，显得英姿勃勃。她正在看着工人们给羊群洗理羊毛。

博德伍德向她打了招呼，芭思希芭离开水池，以便和他私自交谈。在附近小河的拐弯处，博德伍德叫住她，她就停下来等她。他向她求婚，而她在他倾诉衷情的时候也尽量保持镇静。她一边尽力和

他一样保持自己的尊严，一面回答说她尊重他但不爱他，所以不能接受他的求婚。

博德伍德的感情失去了控制，他请求她让他再次表白他的爱意，倾听他的恳求。他做出和她结婚的决定，部分是因为她的那张情人卡向他表达的情意。尽管她不爱他，但他还是表示愿意与她结婚。芭思希芭再次拒绝了他，并解释说她对她送卡的行为并没有多想。博德伍德一心只想得到她，不肯听任何拒绝之辞。他答应，只要她同意和他结婚，他会满足她的一切要求。

尽管她同情他，并感到自己对他的痛若负有责任，但还是不能回报他的爱。她请求他给她一些时间考虑考虑。博德伍德坚持要求她不要断然拒绝，再给他一次求婚的机会。她同意了他的要求，但提醒他不要对她抱什么希望。芭思希芭走后，博德伍德呆呆地站在原地，直到回过神来才匆匆回到家里。

> **评论：** 这只是芭思希芭与博德伍德之间第一次痛苦的交锋。她那不肯付出任何代价、只想索取别人尊重的愚蠢的想法是违背自然、甚至是违背人性的（她就像一朵只许别人在围栏外面观赏的玫瑰或者一件艺术品）。她最终只能得到她那愚蠢行为的报应。她的骄傲必须受到打击，在寻找到真正的幸福之前她必须认识到她只是一个凡人，是普通人中的一个。

第二十章
困惑——磨羊毛剪子——争吵

芭思希芭客观地考虑了博德伍德的求婚。她感到博德伍德对她那么多的承诺是出于善意，从社会地位来讲这桩婚事也无可挑剔，而且在韦瑟伯里他也是个受人敬重的人物。如果只从婚姻本身来考虑，博德伍德可称得上是丈夫的最佳人选。但她既不想要结婚又不爱他这个人。除此之外，她更乐于经营她的农场，不想放弃这种

自由的生活。她对自己鼓励了博德伍德的行为感到不安，于是去找正在磨羊毛剪子以备剪羊毛的加布里埃，征求他的意见。

她把凯尼·贝尔支走，转动了几下磨石，然后请求加布里埃让她拿着剪子，好一边干活一边和他说话。她想知道村民们对她与博德伍德的谈话有什么议论，但加布里埃的注意力只放在剪刀上。他回答说村民们都认为他俩的谈话很奇怪，但又都认为他俩一年之内就会成婚。

她喊道，他们这么想一定是疯了，并且让加布里埃去控制住这个谣言。加布里埃闻此既吃惊又欣喜，但他拒绝了芭思希芭交给他的去向人们说博德伍德并没有向她求婚的使命。

芭思希芭对他直呼她名字的做法做了更正，她坚持说不会有结婚这回事。她对他又同情（因为他是个失恋者）又气恼（因为他已经不爱她了）。由于她看中他的诚实与坦率，她向他征求对目前形势的看法。他告诉她，她的行为算不上是任何有头脑、有身份的女人的做法，又补充说也许她会讨厌他的直言不讳。芭思希芭对他公正但不客气的评论感到恼火，试图根本不去理会他的指责，但她还是发了火。由于对他的直言不讳恼羞成怒，她一气之下命令他周末之前离开农场。她甚至气愤地命令他永远不要在她面前露面。加布里埃同意离开农场，然后镇定自若地走开了。

评论： 芭思希芭与加布里埃都是独立自由的人，但他的独立是成熟的，而她却还没有修炼出这份成熟。她大概也知道他会有什么看法，但还要问；她习惯于听到奉承之言，也极力想要得到他人的奉承。听到加布里埃的坦率直言她异常恼怒，于是像个任性的孩子一样把他赶出了农场。对摩西离开法老的《圣经》典故的引用在这里几乎是戏拟英雄诗体式的对小人物的嘲讽。

加布里埃对他那困惑的女主人自然是既耐心又体贴。他完全明白她还太年轻，不能很好地做出判断。他从未失去过自尊，即使是在她大发脾气的时候也能不卑不亢。

第二十一章
羊栏中的麻烦——送信儿

芭思希芭“战胜”加布里埃的时间没有多长。第二天，她的羊群走失了方向，走进了一片苜宿地，因而受了伤。芭思希芭责怪工人们没有及时把羊群从草地里赶出来。在他们交谈的时候，有几只羊又掉到草地里，受了重伤。

塔尔说抢救羊群的唯一方法是用针刺羊的身体两侧，这是一种特殊的治疗方法。但这需要很高的技术，只有加布里埃能做得了。芭思希芭开始时不同意去请加布里埃，但看到死去的和奄奄一息的羊群，她不得不屈尊一下。她派拉班去请加布里埃，但又担心加布里埃也许已经走了。然而加布里埃叫人带回话来说他可以来，但除非她客客气气地请他。看到又有一只羊死去了，芭思希芭匆匆跑进屋里给加布里埃写了张字条，上面写上了这样的话：“加布里埃，请别抛弃我！”大家翘首等待着事情的结果。加布里埃最后终于来了，脸上丝毫不带获得了小小胜利的得意神色。芭思希芭轻轻地责备了他；他为她态度的转变而感到不解。他赶到地里，在羊身上插上一根管子，放出羊体内的郁积的气体。羊群脱离了危险之后，芭思希芭确信他还爱着她，于是请求他留下来。加布里埃同意了。

评论： 当芭思希芭承认需要加布里埃时，她的独立性就慢慢减弱了。但加布里埃的独立性却在增强，当他回到农场时他是完全自主的。这样他俩之间就建立了一种新的关系。

可笑的是，在芭思希芭赶走加布里埃的第二天她就被迫再次

去请他回来。村民混乱中的表现是喜剧性的，但他们却一齐认定只有加布里埃才能够拯救羊群。这样芭思希芭迫不得已接受了这个事实，派人去请加布里埃。

加布里埃以他独特的方式控制了局面。出于良知，也出于他“顺其自然”的信条，他等着她适当的请求。他用这种方式宣布了他的独立性。但芭思希芭并没有失去对他的控制，这一点可以从她对他的欢迎和她的微笑中看得出来。

第二十二章
大谷仓与剪羊毛的人

6 月的第一天，村里的人集合在大谷仓里帮忙剪羊毛。这座既像个教堂又像个城堡的旧谷仓干这个用正合适。韦瑟伯里这个地方还没有现代化的技术，剪羊毛还像多少年前一样进行。韦瑟伯里似乎没有岁月流过的痕迹，它拒绝任何变化。

芭思希芭看着工人们在加布里埃的指导下干着各种活计，他俨然是一切工作的总管。芭思希芭看着他剪羊毛，而他也暗自乐于得到她的关注，听到她的谈话。凯尼用芭思希芭名字的字首在剪过毛的羊身上做记号，抱走羊毛，然后再等着新的羊毛剪下来。加布里埃在芭思希芭的陪同下工作的愉快劲儿被博德伍德的出现扰乱了。他们俩低声地交谈着，加布里埃肯定他们的谈话与剪羊毛无关。芭思希芭走出粮仓，回来时换了一件新骑装。

看到她要和博德伍德一起去骑马，加布里埃心烦意乱，他失手割破了一头羊。芭思希芭斥责了他，但他看出她不仅是为一头羊而不快。她告诉他她要去看博德伍德的马群，这里的一切就交给他了。工人们开始议论起博德伍德的来意。亨尼利说他看不出这么独立的一个女人为何还需要个丈夫；他还在为没当上管家而生气。他告诉大家他猜那次洗理羊毛的时候博德伍德吻了芭思希芭。加布

里埃跳起来为芭思希芭辩解，但亨尼利坚持说他的判断没错，并说他自己并不比加布里埃笨。老酿酒师觉得自己被冷落了，所以加布里埃得去平息他和亨尼利俩个人。这种不愉快的气氛直到玛丽安问有没有男人愿意娶她时才得到缓解。加布里埃接着一声不响地干活。芭思希芭对他暗示过想让他当管家，他期待着那个职位，不是为了升职，而是想借用这个职位多和她接近。如果她嫁给了博德伍德，那情况就完全不同了。不管她对他多么不好，他还是爱着她，时刻准备帮助她。凯尼的话打断了他的思路，把他的注意力拉回到剪羊毛工作之后的庆祝会上。普尔格拉斯特别盼着大吃大喝一顿，因为他的身体需要“滋养”。

评论： 在本章中，除了博德伍德、芭思希芭和加布里埃三人之间的复杂关系，我们还能领略到韦瑟伯里村中安宁平静的景色。50 年的岁月并没有给村民们带来任何变化。相比之下，村子始终和先前没有什么区别。村民们像他们的祖辈一样，以同样的方式干着同样的活儿。虽然哈代也意识到像韦瑟伯里这样的村庄已经不存在了或者很少见了，但他对这里细致入微的描写深刻地表现出他对这种生活、以及它所代表的传统的敬重之情。

第二十三章
黄昏——第二次表白

农场的大厅中准备了剪完羊毛举行庆祝晚宴时用的一张大的长条桌子。桌子的一头靠近大厅内的窗口。芭思希芭独自坐在桌子这头首席的位置上，不和工人们在一起。就连被开除的管家彭尼威斯的出现也没有降低她的兴致。她让加布里埃作为主人坐在桌子的另一头招呼他身边的工人们。过了一会儿，博德伍德来了，芭思希芭又让加布里埃把他自己的位子让给他。加布里埃默默地把座位让给了那位农场主，后者看上去异常地幸福快乐。

晚宴后，科根开始唱歌，普尔格拉斯跟着也唱起了一首他自己编的歌。小科根被普尔格拉斯的这首《芭蕾舞曲》逗得笑得前仰后合，他父亲斥责了他，但普尔格拉斯感到自尊心受到了伤害，不肯接着唱下去了。雅各布·斯莫伯里开始朗颂起一首长得没有尽头的叙事诗，这使大家恢复了平静。太阳落山后娱乐活动继续进行，芭思希芭此刻一边编织毛衣一边从窗户向外观看。加布里埃在他的位子上看不到博德伍德了。直到莉迪在屋子里点上了蜡烛，他才看清博德伍德正坐在芭思希芭身边。

村民们请求芭思希芭唱支歌。她让加布里埃吹笛子为她伴奏，唱起了一支关于一个士兵和他的新娘的歌。博德伍德也和她一起唱了起来。村民们安安静静地欣赏他们的表演。加布里埃观察着博德伍德对芭思希芭与对村民们的态度，他觉得博德伍德的地位比(自己的)更稳固一些。

芭思希芭和大家道了晚安，然后关上窗户，放下挡板。加布里埃起身回家；村民们跟在他身后，边走边赞扬着彭尼威斯的"改邪归正"。

屋内，博德伍德一直在劝说芭思希芭和他结婚。她答应他，如果她能成为他的好妻子，她会试着去爱他、嫁给他，但她当晚不能给他一个认真、正式的保证。除此之外，她不再答应什么。五六周后她也许会答应嫁给他。

博德伍德心满意足地离开了。芭思希芭为她过去的行为感到羞愧，也深深地为博德伍德的爱而感动。她的玩笑会引出了这么严重的后果，这是她终料未及的，但她为自己能够征服博德伍德这样一个人又感到一种乐趣。

评论： 博德伍德和芭思希芭之间紧张的关系由于加布里埃冷静的观察和村民的欢乐气氛得到了缓解。哈代使读者看到

了村民们纯朴的娱乐方式:相互善意的嘲弄和歌唱都是大家喜爱的传统节目。他们能够宽容地让彭尼威斯回到他们中间。看到他明显地改邪归正了,大家都愿意原谅他的过失。通过这一章我们还看到了芭思希芭与她的工人们之间轻松随意的关系。他们每个人都清楚自己的位置,他们请求她唱歌,而她也接受了,这足以说明了他们之间合谐的关系。

芭思希芭所唱的那首歌是哈代善用反语和悬念的又一绝好的例证。她唱道,一个甜言蜜语的士兵在寻找一个新娘。哈代告诉读者,在场的人都会记住那位快乐的新娘和聪明的士兵,但他并没有说明记忆会是甜蜜的还是痛苦的。这里提到的士兵和他与芭思希芭之间的关系是下一章中特罗伊出场的引子。

第二十四章
当夜——冷杉树丛中

由于芭思希芭开除了管家从而自己管理农场,所以她只能自己每天晚上去查看农场的土地。她提着一盏灯照路,碰到特别黑的角落就把灯捻亮一些仔细看看。虽然她很安全,农场也管理得很好,几乎找不出什么错来,但加布里埃常常背着她先巡查一遍。

剪完羊毛的那天晚上,她照例去田里巡查,从谷仓那边传来的一种声音打破了深夜的寂静。她转身穿过一条小路走回房间去。这条小路两旁长着一丛丛冷杉,浓密的树枝和粗针使小路看起来像一个幽长、黑暗的大厅。虽然在黑暗中这里似乎不太安全,但平时芭思希芭并不觉得这里不安全。今天,她听到从小路那头传来了脚步声,这却使她惊慌起来。她安慰自己说这可能是一个陌生人或某个正在经过这里走在回家的路上的村民。她后悔不该在这么黑的地方碰见一个陌生人。当两人擦肩而过时,她感到自己的裙子被拽了一下,这使她几乎跌倒在地上。

一个男人的声音问她伤着了没有，并解释说他们之间不知被什么绊住了。他向她要过提灯。借着灯光，她惊奇地发现眼前站着的是个军人。原来是他的马靴刺缠住了她的长裙。他想替她解下来，但她拒绝了。可是长裙被马靴刺上的距轮扎得太深，她无法挣脱出来。他弯下身去帮她。这个动作使她看清他是个年轻英俊的中士。虽然他认为应该把裙子从马刺处剪开，但他还是继续试着把线解开，并用这个时间冷静地观察芭思希芭的容貌，赞赏她的美丽。

他的赞美使她很困惑，但她看出来他是在有目的地拖延时间。她怕突然用力拉会把裙子弄得更糟，或者干脆从她身上拽下来。军人继续着他的奉承，直到她终于把裙子从马刺中拽了出来。他解释说他在这里不是生人，并自我介绍说他是特罗伊中士。她小心翼翼地从他身边走过，在小路上慢慢走了几步后便飞快地跑回房间，向莉迪询问这人是谁。

莉迪告诉她，特罗伊在本地是个有名的快乐放荡、聪明伶俐的花花公子。人们都说他受过良好的教育，是贵族的后裔，但他却放弃了大好前程去当了兵。芭思希芭虽然很自信，但她却被这个年轻军人迷住了。她甚至责备自己不该对他那么不礼貌。她很高兴听到他的赞美。虽然博德伍德可能是个可靠的情人，但他却从未赞美过她。

评论： 在前一章中，哈代已经十分巧妙地用芭思希芭所唱的歌给特罗伊的出现埋下了伏笔。特罗伊像歌中的士兵一样会用甜言蜜语来诱惑人，他的巧舌果然迷住了芭思希芭。我们已经知道她是个虚荣、爱听奉承话的人。这里，当读到她乐意领受特罗伊的赞美时我们并不感到奇怪，尽管她还有些不好意思和自知之明。

这个裙子与马刺相绊的情节明显是作者有意安排的，但它使

两人有了相识的机会，并且使她成了他甜言蜜语的忠实听众。这个情节的背景十分“浪漫”，那么一条幽暗的小路无疑是发生一些激动人心的惊险奇遇的绝好场所。

第二十五章
对新结识者的描写

这一章的大部分篇幅是对特罗伊的性格描写。他是个生活在现实中的人，从不考虑未来，也从不关心过去。他从不失望，因为他根本就没有什么希望。他的诚实有其两面性：他对男人比较坦诚相见，对女人却认为可以不那么诚实。他的这些缺点似乎是微不足道的或者是可以原谅的(因为他还只是个年轻人)。他的错误都是因为莽撞行事而引起的，但他却很少做善事、好事。

他似乎很活跃，但他的行为大多出于一时头脑发热。等到热情冷却下来，原有的计划和工作也就随之会懈怠下来。无论他的思维多么敏捷，性格多么坚强，他都缺乏意志力。作为一个军人，他所受过的教育可以说是不错的，而且他特别擅长恭维别人(特别是女人)。他可以不加思索地甩出一串串的恭维之辞，但却很少考虑这些话的后果。

剪完羊毛一两周以后，芭思希芭觉得没有博德伍德在身边轻松了不少，于是去草场看工人们收干草。有一处的草已经堆成垛了。特罗伊正在和工人们一起干活，就像一位骑士在替自己的心上人效力。芭思希芭一到，特罗伊就注意到了她，他把手里的草叉放在地上，朝她走了过来。芭思希芭脸上一红，眼睛盯着前面的路面。

评论： 对特罗伊的描写几乎与加布里埃完全相反，加布里埃不具备的特罗伊样样具备。他并不诚实可靠。相反，他的一切行为都出于一时冲动。只有在当时的情况适合他时他才会做出一副有道德的、正义的样子。他非常喜欢奉承女性，而且

因为经常这么做，所以练得巧舌如簧。一个方面来说，他和芭思希芭有着相同之处：他从不去设想他的这些甜言蜜语会有什么影响和结果。哈代早在田里收干草一节中就指出了他性格中的虚伪的一面：他并不是真心帮助工人们干活，而似乎只是为了引起芭思希芭的注意。留心的读者会和加布里埃深有同感：特罗伊这个人并不是表里一致的。

第二十六章
草场边的一幕

特罗伊把芭思希芭叫作"谷物市场上的皇后"，并为他们第一次见面时他孟浪的举动向她道歉。最后，他甚至把道歉又变成了奉承。芭思希芭觉得他的放浪是该有所约束，但她喜欢听他的赞美之辞，也无法对他严厉起来。他说他对漂亮女人的喜爱甚至限制了他对宗教的崇拜。尽管他说得认真，但她还是笑了起来。他的赞美完全俘获了她。特罗伊也注意到了这些甜言蜜语的效果。

他继续进行赢得她的工作。他说一想到她会对他感兴趣他就将非常自负。芭思希芭说他这人是很自负，之后他巧妙地又把讨论他缺点的话题转移到说和她谈话他有多么愉快的话题上。他说他第一次见到她就爱上了她。芭思希芭说这不可能，并想结束这场谈话。当她问他几点了时，他把一只金表送到她面前。这是塞弗恩伯爵家的祖传之物。他请求她收下这块表，并说他一想到表在她手里就会感到非常高兴。此时他的话不知不觉地要比他预想的认真了许多。她把表还给了他，并说他在本地逗留期间可以来拜访她。芭思希芭的心情被特罗伊的花言巧语扰得困惑不安。她再也无法平静地面对收干草的工人们，于是不得不离开了草场。她考虑着这次见面的意义，思忖着他的话有多少是可信的。

评论： 我们完全可以把"赢得芭思希芭的心"作为这一章的标题。由于精于求爱之术，特罗伊一下子就准确地把握住了

博得她好感的方式。他大力赞美她的美貌与魅力，但却不图回报：不求她答应什么，也不求她的陪伴。这种方法绝妙至极，芭思希芭认为她终于找到了一个能够说一些她爱听的奉承话的人，而这人除了让她接受赞美以外又别无所求。她开始丧失理智，就连拒绝他的表的勇气都差一点丧失了。

然而，特罗伊也掉进了自己设置的陷阱。他的巧言令色和装腔作势的举动(如冒冒失失地把表送给她的举动)的确博得了她的好感。但他也发现他已超过了他以往保持的对爱情的认真程度。芭思希芭的美貌和魅力征服了他，这次相见成了他俩生活中的一个转折点。

第二十七章
收蜂

6月下旬的时候，芭思希芭在果园里看到了一窝蜜蜂。大多数时候，蜜蜂们都比较"合作"，把窠筑在矮一些的树枝上，让工人们不费劲就能够到蜂窝里的蜜蜂。但是今年蜜蜂的筑窠时间比较晚，而且还都在难以够到的较高的树枝上，这就意味着工人们得用梯子和长竿去够它们。这种情况往年也发生过。

由于工人们都在忙着收草，芭思希芭决定自己去干把蜜蜂赶入蜂房的活儿。她戴上手套、一顶大帽子和一个厚厚的面罩，然后爬上了梯子。这时特罗伊来了，他让芭思希芭停下。她急忙从梯子上下来，把蜂房扔到了地上。特罗伊请求她让自己替她把蜜蜂抖进蜂房。她坚持让他戴上保护面罩。他戴上面罩的样子很滑稽，她大笑起来，这使他们之间的关系更加亲密了。在他忙着干活的时候她又偷偷地整了整自己的装束打扮。他干完这项工作后从树上下来，让她帮忙把面罩解下来。为了消除两人接触时的尴尬，她问他是否可以表演一下击剑术给她看看。

她曾听说过他的剑术高超，她想亲眼见见。他答应只要她能等到晚上他就可以给她表演，因为他得先想办法找到一把剑。他要她答应一定来见他。当她谨慎地提出是否能够带莉迪一起去时，他断然拒绝了。她急于看他的表演——或者说急于再见到他——所以就答应了。

评论： 在这一章中我们又领略了哈代对乡村习俗和责任的谙熟。对于韦瑟伯里纯朴的村民来说，季节的变化不仅仅是由天气的变化体现的，更是由一年中不同时节所从事的不同劳动所体现的。春天是洗理羊毛的季节，夏天是剪羊毛、收干草和赶蜜蜂进蜂房的时候。哈代利用这种特殊的日历来配合故事情节的发展。芭思希芭与特罗伊的关系是在夏季发展起来的，所以它带有一种夏天的特性：轰轰烈烈，但转瞬即逝。

第二十八章
长满羊齿植物的山谷

晚上8点钟，芭思希芭朝她家对面的小山旁的一块空地走去。这里到处长着一丛丛高高的羊齿植物，有一处还形成了一个自然的小山谷，四周长满羊齿植物。她停下来，想转身回家，但一想到中士会多么失望，她就又决定像她答应的那样留下来。特罗伊向走进小山谷时的芭思希芭打完招呼后就把剑拿了出来。

他开始舞剑，边舞边解释他的动作。芭思希芭欣赏着剑锋在夕阳中闪闪发光的样子，她那冒险的精神被剑术调动了起来。她被他的表演深深地吸引住了，忘却了来赴这次奇特的约会时内心的不安。特罗伊在她身边舞着剑试她的胆量。开始时她怕他伤着自己，但特罗伊的剑术高明，根本就伤不到她。他让她站在那儿别动，芭思希芭被身边转圈挥舞的剑锋发出的呼啸和寒光撩拨得激动不已。最后他把表演推向了高潮：他漂亮地削下了她的一小撮头发，然后赞扬起她的勇敢。他让她站着别动，他要用剑杀死爬在

她衣服前襟上的一只小虫子，并且保证碰不到她一丝毫毛。他说她一点都不用怕，虽然剑锋凌厉，但他的剑术是万无一失的。

她在石南上坐下来之后，特罗伊告诉她他得走了，但他要把她的那撮头发保存起来留作纪念。他把头发细心地收起来，走之前弯下腰吻了她一下向她告别。芭思希芭心里又兴奋又内疚，不由得眼泪流了出来。

评论： 剑术表演是特罗伊魅力的一个证明，他是那么不同于她所认识的其他人。他那富有男子气概的娴熟的剑术给他蒙上了一层冒险的异国的情调。他对自己的剑术绝对自信，甚至不惜以她的生命为代价来证实他的剑术。和加布里埃踏踏实实、实实在在的养羊技术相比，特罗伊的技巧似乎更具魅力，却没什么实际用处。

特罗伊的剑术在芭思希芭身上引起的是感情的而非理智的反应。他的表演既让人激动又让人害怕（就像看马戏团的表演一样），它预示着一种更具体的试探。此时，芭思希芭对耐心细致的考查再也没有兴趣了（像加布里埃要求她的那样），她一下子就被特罗伊强烈的感情征服了。

第二十九章
黄昏谈话的细节

芭思希芭尽管有很好的判断力，也直觉地感到他有弱点，但还是发现自己爱上了他。这种爱不是理性的。如果任何一个女孩子把同样的情况和关系告诉她，她都会建议对方不要再把这种关系发展下去。芭思希芭太沉溺于自己的感情之中，无法分辩她对特罗伊的依恋是怎么回事。她可以和莉迪谈论博德伍德，因为她对他只有尊敬；而对特罗伊的爱情她只能埋藏在自己心里。

加布里埃看出了芭思希芭这股狂热的感情。他感到很难过，这倒不单是因为他爱她，更因为他看出了特罗伊性格上的缺点。一天晚上，当他看到她散步回来时就抓住机会和她谈起她对待博德伍德的态度。芭思希芭否认她会嫁给博德伍德。加布里埃这时再也不能不发表自己的看法了。他指出博德伍德对她的求婚已经是尽人皆知了，村民们都已认定他们会早日完婚大吉。芭思希芭坚持她的观点：她尊重他，是他急于结婚的，但她并没接受他的求婚。加布里埃指责特罗伊毁掉了博德伍德的希望，并提醒她特罗伊靠不住；如果她和特罗伊结合的话，她的好名声会被毁掉。

芭思希芭赶紧为特罗伊辩护，解释说是他的谦虚掩盖了他良好的表现。她举了这方面的一个例子，说他每次进教堂都从塔侧的一个旧的小门进去，坐在后面不被人注意的地方。看到芭思希芭强烈地为他辩护、又这么强烈地依赖于他，加布里埃感到非常沮丧。

加布里埃安慰她说他还爱着她，但为了她的名誉，请求她和博德伍德结婚。她一气之下又将他赶出农场，但他却像对待一个任性的孩子一样对待她。他告诉她自己已经厌倦了替她解决各种她自找的麻烦；如果她能找到一个负责任的人接替他管理农场，他就可以走。他又补充说她应该感谢他留下来，因为只要他离开她这里，他的身份就会得到提高。他想留下来替她工作只是出于对她的忠诚。他为他的失礼向她道歉，并说他关心的只是她今后幸福与否。虽然她暗自为他的忠诚感到高兴，但她还是让他走了。加布里埃担心把她一个人丢在一个这么荒凉的地方不安全，但当他看到特罗伊向她走来时就匆匆回家了。路过教堂的时候他注意到塔侧的那个小门（据说特罗伊就是从这里进教堂的），但这扇小门好像很少有人进出，因为门上爬满了长春藤。

评论： 哈代在这章里通过那扇无人使用的教堂侧门突出了特罗伊不诚实和不可靠的人品。编这样的谎话又不去考虑它会不会被揭穿正是特罗伊一贯的做法。具有讽刺意味的是，

加布里埃发现了实情。他心明眼亮,能够明察秋毫,而芭思希芭却被特罗伊虚假的魅力迷惑,她也许永远不会注意到这扇没人使用的小门。

第三十章
灼热的双颊与哭肿的眼睛

芭思希芭回到家里时既激动又有一点儿伤心。特罗伊又一次吻了她,这使她激动;但他又告诉她他要去巴思城看望朋友,这让她伤心。她觉得她得马上给博德伍德写封信,坚决地拒绝这桩婚事。她本想等博德伍德从一次短途旅行回来再告诉他这件事,但现在她想让他尽快地收到这封信。

当她到厨房里去找人替她发信时,她听到厨房里的女佣们正在议论她和特罗伊的婚事。她冲进厨房,责问她们为什么背后议论她。他们承认谈话和她有关。她说她对特罗伊并没有兴趣,但接下来替他辩护的行为又泄露了内心的秘密。她警告她们,谁要是再讲他的坏话她就开除谁。她把信扔在那里,自己匆匆回到大厅,气愤的心情难以平静。莉迪跟进来向她道歉,并向她保证,以后再有这样的谣言她就会用这样的话来辟谣:芭思希芭是位淑女,像她这样的人绝不会嫁给特罗伊。

当莉迪听芭思希芭说她的确爱上了特罗伊时大吃一惊。芭思希芭后悔不该否认这份爱情,并要莉迪发誓,说特罗伊的名声不错。莉迪的迟疑激怒了她。此刻,莉迪被她态度的突然转变弄得不知所措了,但她最后答应要把特罗伊往好处想,并保证不对任何人泄露她们这次谈话的内容。但莉迪也被这种突变弄得坐立不安,她说她要辞去芭思希芭这儿的工作。

芭思希芭安慰她说她对自己与其说是佣人,不如说更像朋友;莉迪要走了她就一个朋友也没有了。她们又重归于好,建立了一种新

的友谊，为此两人十分高兴；但莉迪让芭思希芭克制一下对特罗伊那狂热的感情。她发现那是一种女性特有的特点，并为自己身上缺少这种特点而有些悲伤。

评论： 特罗伊在村民中是臭名远扬的。他们不会被他的魅力所蒙蔽。特罗伊和加布里埃不一样，他在村子里没有朋友；至此为止，他的朋友好像只有女性。

芭思希芭的女佣们特别了解特罗伊的为人，也明白他控制住了芭思希芭。她们在议论她的婚事时并没有恶意。但正是因为她们和特罗伊没有关系，她们才能现实地看待特罗伊，只接受关于他的传说中真实的部分。

第三十一章
责备——愤怒

芭思希芭不想见博德伍德，所以第二天晚上，她就准备应莉迪之邀去看望她出嫁的姐姐，借以避开博德伍德。莉迪被准了一周假，芭思希芭想到雅尔伯里和莉迪一起住上一两天。她叫加布里埃和玛丽安替她照看农场；在一次暴雨把周围的一切冲刷得干干净净之后，她就出门了。她高高兴兴地走着，冷不防博德伍德突然出现在前面的小路上。他看上去和以前完全不同，而且完全沉浸在自己的思考中，根本没有注意到芭思希芭，直至他俩碰个正着。

他问她是不是怕他（尽管他这么爱她）；芭思希芭竭力安慰着他，想继续赶路。博德伍德尽力延长这次会面。他问她这是不是她的最后决定，然后求她可怜可怜他。芭思希芭在这种难堪的情况下想把握住自己，但博德伍德恳求她时就像疯了一样。他提醒她说当初是她有意引起他的兴趣的、她是他爱上的第一个女人而且她差不多都答应嫁给他了，这些使他的痛苦加倍地难以忍受。她承认她的那张情人卡是个不高明的玩笑，说对其他男人来讲那只不过

是无聊的调情把戏,她没想到这对他是那么严重的事。他再次指责了一番,请求得到她的同情。这惹恼了芭思希芭。她努力使他平静下来,请他原谅她,建议他愉快地接受这个事实。他认为这完全是个无情无义的建议,不知是永远不再理睬她好还是恳求她接受自己好。

她试着向他解释,虽然她不是铁石心肠,但却不容易爱上任何人。但他并不把她当作一个冷酷的女人看待,并告诉她自己知道她爱上了特罗伊。他把一腔怒火又转向了这个把芭思希芭从他身边抢走的大兵。当她承认自己爱上了特罗伊后,博德伍德后悔自己爱上了她,并因此失去了自己的荣誉与名声。

她被他的言语与举动吓坏了,她说自己只是个没有任何保护的女孩子,他的行为欠缺绅士风度。博德伍德逼迫她承认特罗伊已经吻过她了。他诅咒特罗伊,并预言早晚有一天特罗伊会像他现在一样后悔、痛苦。尽管芭思希芭为特罗伊求情,博德伍德发誓一定要惩罚他。他后悔不该责备芭思希芭,他现在把愤怒和失望的矛头指向了他得胜了的对手。

芭思希芭被他激烈的行为吓坏了。她认为他一向是个含蓄、沉默的人,她庆幸特罗伊没有像大家想像的那样和部队在一起,而是在巴思城。她怕他一回来就会和博德伍德发生一场灾难性的冲突。她想应该提醒特罗伊一声,但又怕如果她执意认为他有危险,他会认为她愚蠢。她坐下来认真地思考着,一门心思全部集中在特罗伊身上,丝毫没有注意到天色已经暗了下来。

评论: 这个诅咒特罗伊的半疯的男人和芭思希芭第一次在卡斯特桥时所认识的那个冷静、含蓄的绅士相去甚远。特罗伊的诅咒是悲剧性的预言,特罗伊将忍受和博德伍德一样的失败。在博德伍德发誓要惩罚特罗伊的同时,哈代也为故事制造了一个新的悬念:这个惩罚会把他们两人都毁掉。

第三十二章
深夜——马的走失

韦瑟伯里的夜晚寂静无声，但在芭思希芭的农场里，11点钟左右，一阵声音打破了这种宁静。有人偷了芭思希芭的马，把它套在了一辆轻便马车上。玛丽安被这声音惊醒。当她明明白白地看到这是一场抢劫时，便急忙跑到离得最近的科根家去报信。科根叫上加布里埃一起去查看，他们三人听到远处有马蹄声。加布里埃决定骑马去追，但因为芭思希芭没有快马，所以他和科根向博德伍德借了两匹马。科根和加布里埃跟着早已消失的马车声音往前追，但不久声音就消失了，无法引导他们往前追了。他们意识到马可能是跛了。加布里埃自信地认为他们能轻松地追上盗马贼，一是因为盗马贼的马跑不快了，二是收路税关卡的看门人也会把他拦住。

加布里埃叫看门人把贼拦住。但当他发现赶车的人竟是芭思希芭时大吃了一惊。芭思希芭说她要去巴思城，并问他们这是在干什么。听说他们犯了这么大的一个错误，竟把她当作了盗马贼，还借了博德伍德的马，她不禁气上心头。她已经用粉笔在车房门上留了几个字，但晚上太黑他们当然看不见。她意识到她应该为他们的责任心感到高兴，于是对他们所做的一切表示了感谢。她的马在她拣出鞋中的一小块石头时绊了一下有点跛了。芭思希芭让他们回家，她自己继续赶路去巴思城。加布里埃和科根答应就这件事严守秘密。

见过博德伍德之后，芭思希芭花了一些时间考虑她的个人问题。她最终决定去告诉特罗伊，让他小心博德伍德，另外，虽然做来不容易，但她也必须听从加布里埃的建议，放弃特罗伊。她觉得自己很可怜，决定立刻去找特罗伊，并傻乎乎地认为他会给她力量，结束他们的这种友谊。但是显然她至少还想再见他一面。虽然去巴

思城的旅程会很艰难，特别是她得连夜起程，但芭思希芭还是决定不去看莉迪和她姐姐了，而是回到农场决定这次更远的旅行。她打算先去看特罗伊，然后离开他，让马休息一下，再骑上它去看莉迪。她希望这样就可以不让别人知道她的巴思之行。但她错误地估计了路程，工人们又以为来了窃贼，这些破坏了她的计划。

评论： 哈代为他的杂志的读者制造悬念的技巧在这章中和在第六章中以同样的结构又一次表现了出来。在这两章中，开始被哈代隐埋了身份、最后出现的都是芭思希芭这个人物。在第六章中，加布里埃最终发现他是在芭思希芭的农场、和她的工人一起灭火的。在这一章中读者会去猜测加布里埃追的就是芭思希芭，但一直到本章的高潮部分我们才得知这人确实是芭思希芭。这种处理手法和前一章一样（在第六章我们最终发现原来韦瑟伯里的农场主竟是芭思希芭！），也创造出了令人惊奇的效果。

第三十三章
阳光下——报信人

芭思希芭在巴思城逗留了两周，她并没有进一步解释她逗留这么久的原因，只是给玛丽安写了张字条，说她还没完成去巴思城要干的事情。此时天气异常干旱，村民们开始收割燕麦。干活儿的时候，玛丽安对大家说她有一种不祥的预感，因为她把大门的钥匙掉在地上摔碎了。一同帮芭思希芭收燕麦的科根和加布里埃看到凯尼·贝尔向他们跑来。他的手指受伤感染了不能干活，已经有好几天没来了。村民们议论说只有谁像这样受了伤，才能享受一点空闲。

所有的工人都凑过来向凯尼打听消息，但他由于刚吃完饭就跑了出来所以不停地打嗝，无法流利讲话。最后他终于说出：他看见了芭思希芭和一个军人在一起，看起来他们俩是正在"谈情说爱的一

对儿”。他说话时又打嗝、又咳嗽、又打喷嚏，这使村民们很不耐烦。最后，科根给了他一些苹果汁喝，想帮他压一压。但凯尼喝得太快，苹果汁洒了一身，害得说话时更加语无伦次了。村民们不停地打断凯尼，这使加布里埃更不耐烦，他急于想了解凯尼要讲的事情。凯尼最后终于讲出，那个和芭思希芭在一起的殷勤的军人是特罗伊中士。当村民们向凯尼问起他在巴思城的见闻时，加布里埃对那两人更加关切了。凯尼向大家讲起了巴思城里的人们的生活习俗以及他自己在那里的经历。（当他讲起那里的人们喝有名的巴思泉水时，马修议论说他们本地的一些习俗对外乡人来说看起来也是不开化的。）加布里埃又问起芭思希芭，凯尼说她和那位英俊的军人一起散步时看上去别提多漂亮了，接着他又讲起巴思城和那儿的人们，最后承认自己没怎么再见过芭思希芭。人们要他发誓，保证看到的人真是芭思希芭，凯尼说他虽然不想发誓，但他能肯定见到的就是她。加布里埃自然被这消息弄得心烦意乱，努力掩示着内心的失望，但科根注意到了他的反应，过去安慰着他。科根说既然芭思希芭不能属于加布里埃，那她是谁的情人就没什么区别了。加布里埃说他也是这么安慰自己的。

评论： 这一章中又出现了悬念的手法，但这一次的用法完全不同了。哈代用了幽默的笔调描写了芭思希芭的巴思城之行，用以引起读者的兴趣。凯尼不是个会讲故事的人：他把他自己的所见所闻、在巴思度过的时光和一些毫不相关的东西混在了一起。另外，由于他又咳嗽又打嗝，朋友想帮忙又帮了倒忙，所以他花了好长时间才把故事讲完。这使听他讲故事的人（还有读者）一直悬着。但无论凯尼讲述的方式多么令人发笑，他讲述的内容却是严肃的，这更加引起了读者的好奇心，让他们急于想知道芭思希芭在巴思城找到特罗伊以后究竟怎么样了。

第三十四章
回到家中——骗子

当天晚上，加布里埃看到芭思希芭坐车和莉迪一起回到了家里，便放宽了心。他靠着科根家花园的大门站着，看暮色越来越沉。这时，博德伍德走过来向他打招呼。博德伍德曾去芭思希芭家请求见她，但被告之她不想见他。他想一定是她还没有原谅上次见面时他的举动。往家走的时候，他看到特罗伊向村子走来，于是决定去和他谈谈。

博德伍德看见特罗伊背着一个毡制旅行提包迎面走来，他走上前去自我介绍起来。他告诉特罗伊，他认为特罗伊是在严重地欺骗芭思希芭，并告诉他，他本人知道特罗伊要娶的是范妮。特罗伊注意到博德伍德的态度非常严肃(并且手里还拿着一根棍棒一般的手杖)，决定尽量耐心地听完他的高见。他向博德伍德解释说他并不想娶范妮，他还太穷，承担不起这个责任。

博德伍德指责特罗伊从自己身边抢走了芭思希芭，并请求他别再继续纠缠她了。他答应，如果特罗伊按他的要求去和范妮结婚，那么自己可以立即给他 50 英镑，等到他们结婚那天再给范妮 500 英镑。特罗伊装出一副感兴趣的样子。但他提醒博德伍德，说范妮只是个佣人。博德伍德掏出了钱，中士接了过去。他嘲笑博德伍德说他只是口头同意了这场交易，博德伍德说他结婚那天还会有 500 英镑等着他(外加给范妮的一份“奖金”)，特罗伊不会愿意失去这么一大笔钱的。

从小路的另一头传来了一阵脚步声，特罗伊告诉博德伍德这是芭思希芭赶来见他了，他得向博德伍德说再见了。芭思希芭热情地向特罗伊问候(博德伍德藏在一旁听见了他们的谈话)；她告诉他，她今晚一个人在家，希望他到她家去坐坐。特罗伊答应她一会儿

就去。当她离开之后，特罗伊又嘲笑起博德伍德的奇怪的交易来。他是真心喜欢范妮，而现在博德伍德又使得这桩婚姻“物有所值”了。博德伍德跳出来向他袭来，特罗伊警告他说如果自己被打伤，芭思希芭一定会痛苦不堪的。这样，他总算保住了自己的一条性命。

现在，博德伍德又转过来要求特罗伊务必娶芭思希芭，否则她就会名誉扫地。他又答应立刻把那 500 英镑也交给特罗伊，并且把身上带着的另外的 21 镑给了他。特罗伊建议他们两人一起去芭思希芭家。到了那儿之后，他到里面取了根蜡烛点上，又交给博德伍德一张报纸，让他借着烛光看看上面登着的他与芭思希芭结婚的告示。

特罗伊取笑了博德伍德的用心。他又说即使是他这么一个不怎么样的人也不会把一个女人当作商品买来卖去。他说范妮已经失踪有一阵子了，虽然他到处找过，但一直没有找到。然后他又嘲笑博德伍德的爱情，说他只要听到一点蛛丝马迹就会把她往最坏里想。他觉得已经给了博德伍德一个教训，于是把钱扔在了路上。

博德伍德见他捉弄了自己，气得大嚷大叫，发誓早晚有一天会惩罚他。特罗伊只是笑他，然后走进屋子把门插上。博德伍德在韦瑟伯里的山里走了一整夜。

评论： 在博德伍德的这场交易中我们看到了两种性格的对比。博德伍德清楚地知道特罗伊这种人可以收买，便慷慨地出钱，想把芭思希芭从他身边拉开，保护她和范妮的好名声。特罗伊看上去似乎对这笔钱不屑一顾，但如果他没有和芭思希芭结婚、没有在这么富有的一个农场里得到那个举足轻重的、稳固的地位的话，他很有可能接受那笔钱，把它当作是和范妮结婚的“奖赏”。

当他开始嘲笑博德伍德的钱的时候，他身上几乎是带有一种恶魔般的性格。继而，他又更加恶毒地在没有告诉博德伍德他已和芭思希芭结了婚的情况下，让他以为芭思希芭深夜与自己在幽会。

第三十五章
楼上的窗口

第二天一大早，加布里埃和科根一起向芭思希芭家走去，他们看到特罗伊悠闲自得地从楼上的窗口探出身来。科根说芭思希芭一定是和特罗伊结婚了。他见加布里埃的脸色变得惨白，就要他努力控制自己的反应。加布里埃被这桩仓促的婚事搞得十分沮丧，他不明白为什么一切都这么偷偷摸摸地完成了，因为依芭思希芭的外向型性格，他们应该举行一个公开得多的婚礼才对。

特罗伊快乐地向他们俩打招呼。加布里埃没有理他，科根提醒他说特罗伊如今已是农场的场主了。加布里埃意识到他得尽量使这种局面不要太不愉快。当科根猜测说也许芭思希芭并不在家时，加布里埃并没有感到安慰，他甚至希望他们猜错了，也许他俩并没有结婚。特罗伊叫住了他俩，向他们讲起他打算改造农场并使其实现现代化的计划。

特罗伊向科根问起博德伍德家族中有没有精神失常的病史，这让两人很吃惊。科根听说过一些谣言，但不能确定。特罗伊轻松地把话题扯开了。他扔给他们一个硬币，让他们去为他的健康喝一杯，加布里埃拒绝了。

科根又一次劝加布里埃不要把感情太明显地表露出来。他认为特罗伊很快就会花钱从军队里退役出来并接管农场。加布里埃回答说，如果他在农场的地位要靠逢迎特罗伊才能维持，那他宁愿离开这里。

两人正走着,见博德伍德骑马过来。他俩往后退了几步让他过去。加布里埃不知道刚才特罗伊问起的关于博德伍德的问题是什么意思。看到这个消息在这位以往冷静沉着的绅士身上的反应,加布里埃忘记了自己的痛苦。看得出博德伍德在骑马回家的路上是在极力控制着自己的动作,但人们从他的动作中却可以明显地看出他那难以忍受的巨大的痛苦。

评论: 本章的情节好像是前一章的翻版。前一章中博德伍德与特罗伊的冲突在这里被特罗伊与加布里埃之间的冲突取代了。特罗伊在这两章中,同这两位对手的较量时似乎都是胜利者。当然,加布里埃对现实冷静、豁达的接受态度与博德伍德的疯狂行为形成了鲜明的对比。这一章中当然没有什么交易,但从特罗伊蛮横地扔一个硬币给两人买酒喝的情节中,我们还是隐约能够听到前一章中特罗伊把博德伍德的钱摔还给他的声音。特罗伊对农场改造的设想暗示出他根本不是一个"自然的"、或者热爱农场的人。加布里埃对传统的农场生活却是抱着热爱和崇敬的态度。

另外,哈代还在这里暗示了博德伍德最后的悲剧。他把博德伍德的行为描写成半疯的或"失去理智的"。特罗伊也问起了博德伍德家是否有精神病史。慢慢地,读者为博德伍德的崩溃做好了心理准备。

第三十六章
财产处于危难之中——欢宴

8 月底的一天,加布里埃站在垛满稻草的院子里。他仔细地观察了天上和地面的变化,认为一场可怕的暴风雨即将来临。他看着那八垛没有遮盖的稻草十分担心,这是农场当年一半的收成。

就在这天晚上,已是农场主的特罗伊正在举办一次庆祝丰收的欢

宴和舞会。加布里埃走近谷仓时,发现到处被装点得喜气洋洋,人们已开始跳舞。特罗伊兴高彩烈地迎来了下一首舞曲——《士兵的乐趣》——因为他刚刚接到了退役通知。这首欢快的乐曲结束之后,加布里埃叫人给特罗伊传话,说有事想和他谈谈,但特罗伊没有过来。加布里埃不愿过去找特罗伊,于是又叫人去告诉他马上会有一场大雨,如果不把草垛盖好,收成就会被毁掉。

特罗伊不听加布里埃的提醒,反而说他过虑了。加布里埃看不下去谷仓中的欢乐情景,他转身往家中走去。特罗伊继续开着他的庆祝宴会,他下令给每位客人都端上一杯烈性的白兰地和一杯水。芭思希芭劝他不要让工人们喝这种酒,因为他们不习惯喝。在场的一些村民也表示赞同。但特罗伊耸了耸肩,根本没把建议当回事。他让妇女们先回家,男人们留下来尽情狂欢。他威胁说谁要是走了他就开除谁。

加布里埃在往回走的路上看到一些虫子和动物都在为暴风雨的来临做准备,羊群也吓得挤成了一团,用身体相互保护着。加布里埃认定他的预感没错,于是转身又回到农场的场院。他想,不能让大雨把收成全部毁掉,让他依旧心爱的芭思希芭破产。他到谷仓去叫些人来帮忙把草垛盖起来,但男人们因为喝了烈酒都昏沉沉地睡过去了,他只好一个人去盖草垛。他先去查看在哪儿能找到所需的材料,发现库房中有后,塔尔却不给他库房的钥匙。这也不能全怪他们:这里的人们没这么喝过烈酒,所以在短时间内就变得神智不清了。加布里埃对草垛的担心愈加厉害,他跑回村子里,从塔尔的太太那里拿到库房的钥匙。几分钟后,他开始从库房里往外拽了四条防雨布,但这只能盖两个草垛,第三垛就盖不上了。他决定把草捆斜着摆好,再用一些没有打捆的麦杆把垛顶盖好。

盖完稻草堆后,他又去盖大麦草垛,这次他只能用干草和树叶这类东西去遮盖它们了。就在他疯狂地抢救庄稼的时候,月亮不见了,空气也静止了。

评论： 很明显，特罗伊根本不是个庄稼人，他只是享受农场主的权力，并不真正关心农场的实际运作。加布里埃却因他与“自然界”亲密的关系而能估计到即将到来的这场暴风雨的威力。他对农场和对芭思希芭无比的忠诚使他坚信他判断的正确性，最后他挺身而出去保护庄稼。

第三十七章
暴风雨——二人齐心合力

电闪雷鸣开始的时候，加布里埃还在奋力干着。这时他发现芭思希芭的窗口亮起了灯。坐在草垛顶上，加布里埃在闪电中看清了整个村子，也注意到自己在草垛上不安全。他想爬下来，但看到雨还没下起来，他又决定先把活儿干完再下来。但为了安全起见，他往支撑着草垛的牧羊杖上拴了根绳子。当他又开始干的时候，芭思希芭被即将到来的暴风雨惊醒了，她不放心庄稼，也赶来和加布里埃一起干。

她问加布里埃特罗伊在哪儿，加布里埃回答说他在谷仓里睡觉呢。她说她来帮忙，加布里埃说如果她不怕摸黑爬梯子的话，就把草捆递给他。闪电越闪越亮。最后，一道异常刺眼的亮光(形状就像蓝火中舞蹈的骷髅)击中了草垛。他们两人由于加布里埃做的“避雷针”的保护而未被击中，但旁边的一棵树却被劈倒了。看到两人侥幸死里逃生，加布里埃让芭思希芭下去，但她不肯。看来暴风雨的高潮已经过去了，加布里埃说他们很幸运，躲过了一场大雨。

芭思希芭为他来抢救庄稼的举动表示感谢，但又问起为什么没人帮他。他想替其他人辩解，但她想起了是怎么回事。她跟着加布里埃来到谷仓，看到所有的男人都在睡觉。当两人又重新去干活时，她问他对她的婚姻有什么看法。她说如果他因此瞧不起她的话，她宁愿去死，并说她这么仓促地结婚是迫不得已的。她说她怕她的名声会因去巴思城见他而被毁了，又说特罗伊告诉她，他那天

还见了另一位漂亮姑娘,说如果她不尽快和他结婚的话,他保证不了不对她变心。她是在嫉妒和恍惚之间和他结的婚。她试图替特罗伊辩解,但加布里埃不作声回答。他看到她累了,就说他自己干就行了。她说如果她帮不上什么忙她就回去了,但她不放心他。他对她的帮助表示赞赏,她也对他的忠诚表示了感谢。

加布里埃默默地干完了活儿,脑子里想着她的事情。他觉得这段时间里他俩之间的关系比以往她未嫁时更亲密了。气候风向标转动的声音打断了他的思路,风向的改变预示着一场大雨。

评论: 这里对暴风雨的描写可与《还乡》中对那场大火的描写相媲美。两者的戏剧效果是一样的,但哈代对那场大火与社会习俗的联系,以及与人物命运的联系的描写技巧在后来的这部小说中得到了更好的发挥。虽然哈代的写作技巧又有了提高,但读者还是能够感觉到这两场戏的相似之处。

在这一章里,哈代还把读者的注意力集中到了芭思希芭和加布里埃关系的发展上。她佩服他对大自然规律的感悟和对乡村生活的了解。他对大自然敏锐的观察和密切的接触也使她受益匪浅。特罗伊对她的控制正在减弱。她明显地越来越依赖于加布里埃的判断力,对加布里埃的感情也越来越深。她觉得有必要向他解释她的婚姻,替自己的婚姻辩解,这就足以说明她的感情变化了。

第三十八章
暴风雨——两个孤独者的相遇

黎明时分,加布里埃还没有干完遮盖稻草垛的活儿。雨下起来时他把麦垛上盖的草又往下压了压,然后又去遮盖大麦垛。暴雨倾盆而下,把忙着干活儿的他浇了个透湿。他记起八个月前也是在这个场院里他曾经帮着扑灭了一场干草引起的大火。7点钟他干

完了活儿。他虽然已是精疲力尽，但当他看到自己为心爱的女人保住了庄稼时心里十分满意。谷仓里的男人们醒来了，开始往家走。特罗伊也回到了农场家中。但他们没有一个人想到暴雨对收成的威胁。

加布里埃自己也往家走去，路上他看见了博德伍德。加布里埃说他看上去好多了，博德伍德却坚持说他本来就好得很。加布里埃又问起他的庄稼有没有遭受损失，但他好像心不在焉，最后终于承认他的粮草也没遮盖，而且他对农场的损失也无动于衷。加布里埃看出芭思希芭的结婚对他的打击有多大：不久之前还很难想像博德伍德会是这样一个不负责的农场主。加布里埃想安慰他一下，但被他打断了。他告诉加布里埃，他现在已经不相信上帝的仁慈了。他在重新朝家里走时平静了下来。他对加布里埃保证说他会尽快忘掉这次打击，并要加布里埃别对别人提起他们的这次相遇和这次谈话。

> **评论：** 加布里埃对自然规律的熟悉使他成功地抵御了暴风雨的袭击。他并不常与大自然对抗，他与自然之间的关系是建立在理解之上的。他像橡树一样，在大风面前会弯下腰去，不被击倒。
>
> 博德伍德却不会弯腰，所以他的精神被失败感打垮了。加布里埃曾经经历了失去羊群的痛苦，他不仅没有被失败打倒，反而变成了一个更优秀的人和更优秀的农民。博德伍德不向命运低头，他一任自己的农场衰败下去。

第三十九章
回到家中——一声喊叫

由于从卡斯特桥市到韦瑟伯里之间的路经过雅尔伯里山，农民们和其他的人坐轻便车经过小山时都要下来走过山去，好减轻马的

负担。10 月的一个星期六的晚上，芭思希芭和特罗伊坐着轻便马车从市场回家经过山坡。芭思希芭在车上赶着马，特罗伊在她身边走着。

芭思希芭提不起精神来，但特罗伊却比平时更高兴。他埋怨说是天气不好使他输了钱，但芭思希芭提醒他说他是赌马输的钱。她要他保证下次在巴德茅斯举行赛马时不再去了，但特罗伊拒绝了她的请求，并埋怨说她的态度使他失望。快走到山顶的时候，他们看到一位妇女从对面走来。特罗伊正要坐上马车时，那位妇女走过去向他打听卡斯特桥市的救济院几点钟关门。

他好像从她的声音中认出了她是谁，但他在回答她"不知道"时很好地控制住了自己。那女人好像也认出了他，她一下子昏倒在了地上。特罗伊让芭思希芭先爬上山顶，他自己来照顾一下这位妇女。芭思希芭一走开，特罗伊就轻声问起那女人从哪里来，现在在韦瑟伯里做什么。她告诉他说她不敢写信，并承认她已身无分文。特罗伊告诉她他现在不能帮助她并对她得去救济院感到很遗憾。但他说星期一他会去看她，再给她带些钱。他向那女人——我们最终得知她是范妮·罗宾——保证他会照顾她的，因为他后悔抛弃了她。

芭思希芭走到山顶的时候看到特罗伊急急忙忙地追了上来，那妇女又慢慢朝卡斯特桥的方向走去。特罗伊默默地接过缰绳，芭思希芭问他认不认识那个女人。特罗伊说他认识，但不知道她的名字，而且也不肯再解释什么了。

> **评论：** 芭思希芭与特罗伊之间的裂缝越来越大了，他们赖以结合的不稳固的基础显然正在一点点地瓦解。在这里，芭思希芭一个人坐在车上、特罗伊在一旁走着的情景很微妙地暗示出他们将会分手。

读者很快就能猜出，他们俩在路上碰到的那个女人就是范妮。哈代一直用“戴面纱”的手法隐瞒了她的身份。通过她向路人询问救济院的情景，我们可以想像出她被特罗伊抛弃后所处的困境。救济院在当时是穷人走投无路时的去处。特罗伊认识到他必须帮助范妮，但他推迟了对她的帮助，直到范妮到了生与死的边界。

第四十章
卡斯特桥的公路上

范妮在路上又走了一阵。她的身体每走一步都变得更加虚弱。最后她倒在一个草堆上睡着了。醒来时天已经黑了，她隐约看见远处卡斯特桥市的灯光。她鼓足气力走完最后的几英里路，不断地告诉自己星期一她就会见到特罗伊，但又意识到，到了星期一也许她已经躺在坟墓里了。

她走着的时候，听到钟声已敲了深夜 1 点。一辆马车从她身边驶过，车灯映出了她那张年轻的但又饱受痛苦的脸。当她走过了两英里的界碑时，她已支撑不住自己，不得不找了两根树枝当拐棍拄着走。有了这两根树枝，她又撑着走了一英里路，但最终还是精疲力尽地昏倒了。几分钟以后，她又挣扎着站了起来，拄着树枝继续勇敢地向前走。她忍着痛苦向前爬，边爬边数着路标以缩短距离。当她爬到公路与卡斯特桥市之间的桥上时，她庆幸只剩下半英里路了，但她实在没有力气再向前爬了。

她躺在桥上，费力地想着怎样再往前走。一只大狗走了过来舔她的脸，她又靠着狗支撑着坐起来，想继续向前走。有了一丝力气之后，她又赶着狗继续前行了。她小心地避开别人的帮助，似乎是怕被人认出来。

虽然行动缓慢，但她最终还是爬到了卡斯特桥的救济院门前。在

就要够到门铃的那一刻，她又昏倒在了门口的台阶上。此刻已经是凌晨6点钟了，救济院里的人们开始活动起来。一个男人打开门把她扶了进去。她问起门口的那条狗，那人说他用石块把它赶跑了。那男人提着一盏灯在前边引路；两个女人扶着范妮，把她带到楼里去。

评论： 范妮去卡斯特桥的经历无疑是文学史上最令人肝肠寸断的经历的缩影。为了博得读者对范妮的同情，哈代调动了所有的感情因素。实际上，范妮依靠狗的帮助的情节有些夸张，甚至有些可笑。（这让我们想起哈里特·比彻·斯托夫人的《汤姆叔叔的小屋》中莉莉跳到冰块上的情节。）困境中只有狗能帮助她，这样的处理具有讽刺意味。她像是被整个人类（特别是特罗伊）抛弃了。诚然，她是被救济院接纳了，但从救济院的那个男人用石块把狗赶走的行为中不难看出救济院中的人们也缺乏同情心。

读者对于范妮为什么特别不想被人认出来感到好奇。范妮似乎除了缺钱之外，还想对特罗伊隐瞒一些别的什么东西。

第四十一章
疑惑——接范妮回农场

在遇到范妮之后的当天晚上，芭思希芭和特罗伊是在沉默与痛苦中度过的，第二天差不多一整天也是如此。特罗伊最后向她要20镑钱，说是为赛马用。芭思希芭求他不要去，特罗伊不肯呆在家里，坚持要钱。他承认他需要钱，但不是为了去赛马。她答应从家用中给他一些钱，但她对婚姻中出现的冲突感到遗憾。她觉得他在冷落她，这在以前从来未曾有过。

特罗伊第二天一定要出去。他拿出金表，打开后盖，盯着里边藏着的一缕头发仔细看着。芭思希芭偶然抬起头来，她注意到了那缕

头发，非常生气，于是大叫起来，问他那是谁的头发。特罗伊装作没事一样，说这是她的头发，自己差不多已经把它忘了。芭思希芭知道他在撒谎，因为那头发是金黄色的，于是又追问下去。特罗伊有意激起她的嫉妒心，承认这是一个漂亮的年轻姑娘的头发，而且那姑娘还未嫁人呢。

两人一直争吵不休。芭思希芭让特罗伊把头发烧掉，但特罗伊气愤至极，不愿平息这场争吵。他告诉她，他也和她一样后悔和她结了婚。芭思希芭被他的话吓了一跳，说自己只是因为他爱上别人才后悔和他结婚的。特罗伊透露出是在路上遇到的那个女人勾起了他对往事的回忆。芭思希芭拚命地求他把他与那女人的关系如实地告诉她。她甚至低声下气地求他对自己公平一点儿。她已经不再骄傲，并为自己对特罗伊的迷恋感到痛心：他给她带来的只有痛苦和耻辱。

第二天早晨，当她像往常一样骑马从农场巡视回来时，听说特罗伊已经去了卡斯特桥。吃完早饭，她尽力稳住了自己，又步行去农场的另一头转转。她想起了加布里埃对她的忠诚，琢磨起如果嫁给他的话会怎样。走着走着，她看见博德伍德碰到了加布里埃，两人说了几分钟话。他俩看见普尔格拉斯路过，就把他也叫了过来。博德伍德走后，她问约瑟夫·普尔格拉斯发生了什么事，他告诉她范妮·罗宾已经死在了卡斯特桥的救济院里。他不太清楚她死的细节，但他告诉芭思希芭，博德伍德打算派辆车去把尸体运回韦瑟伯里埋葬。

芭思希芭从心底里可怜那个女孩。由于范妮曾经是叔叔农场中的一员，所以芭思希芭让普尔格拉斯准备一辆新马车，再准备一些常春藤和鲜花放在范妮的棺材上，预备自己负责安葬范妮。普尔格拉斯告诉她说范妮在救济院已经住了几天了，听说她回来前曾在军队的驻地当过缝纫女工。芭思希芭立刻意识到她和特罗伊在路上碰到的那个女人就是范妮。她差一点昏了过去，但她控制住了

自己。她问起范妮头发的颜色,他说记不得了。

一小时以后,普尔格拉斯把车赶来让她检查。她还在生气,问普尔格拉斯还知不知道范妮别的事,普尔格拉斯说除了博德伍德和加布里埃告诉他的情况,别的他就一无所知了。于是芭思希芭就让他上路去操办这件丧事。

他走后,芭思希芭向莉迪问起范妮的情况,发现她的头发就是金黄色的。范妮的心上人也是特罗伊那个军团的一个士兵。莉迪又说特罗伊曾经和自己说过,他和范妮的心上人很熟,而且实际上他们俩长得还很像。这消息使芭思希芭难以承受。她神经质地叫莉迪别说了。

评论: 这一章的标题对读者有些误导的作用。范妮得到的这种礼遇出乎我们的意料。但是,范妮只有在去世之后才在竞争中打败了芭思希芭,她活着的时候绝不可能占胜芭思希芭。从一开始,范妮的存在对于他们的婚姻就一直是个第三者似的阴影,但那时芭思希芭还可以和她公开抗争。但具有讽刺意义的是,范妮这么一个毫无保护能力的弱者,却是以她无辜的方式使这桩婚姻最后破裂的人物。

特罗伊推迟帮助范妮的结果是悲剧性的。这次因未曾谋面她又毫不留情地使他陷于失望之中,但他的认识和悔悟还在后面。对于范妮的需要,芭思希芭的态度比特罗伊的慈善得多。她立刻采取行动,负责她的后事。但不幸的是,她的慈爱之心换来的却是发现了范妮与特罗伊之间的感情纠葛。

第四十二章
约瑟夫与他的使命——鹿头酒店

卡斯特桥救济院外是一座围墙,只有一扇角落里的小门供人们出

入。门的最下端离地面有几英尺，虽然这原本是为装卸马车设计的，但从门外高高的杂草来看，这扇小门并不常开。普尔格拉斯被告之去这扇小门。有两个人从门里抬出了一口简陋的棺材，把它停放在了马车上。其中一个人在棺材盖上用粉笔写了几个字，然后用黑布罩上了棺材。普尔格拉斯从他们手中接过了死亡登记证。他按照芭思希芭的吩咐把常春藤和花朵撒在了棺材上。在赶车回韦瑟伯里的路上，眼前突然起了一阵大雾，马车无法前行了。普尔格拉斯后悔一个人出门。走近鹿头酒店的时候，他决定进去喝一杯啤酒壮壮胆再上路。不幸的是，他在那里遇到了克拉克和科根。两人拉他多喝了一会儿以作为在种鬼天气出门的补偿。就这样，在教堂墓地当晚关门之前把范妮的尸体埋葬的计划就将落空了。

虽然普尔格拉斯向他们说明了自己的使命，但他的两个朋友还是一杯又一杯地替他叫酒；他呆的时间越长，他的使命感就越弱。加布里埃来了，他对普尔格拉斯的失职非常生气。普尔格拉斯的两个朋友想替他解释，但加布里埃意识到普尔格拉斯不能再赶车把尸体运回村里了。于是，他自己走出酒店把马车赶回了韦瑟伯里。他碰到牧师，牧师告诉他时间已经太晚、不能举行入葬仪式了。既然死亡登记证还在普尔格拉斯手上，那么明天再举行葬礼也行。他建议把尸体抬到教堂里去过夜，加布里埃认为这个计划看起来最妥当不过了，但得经过芭思希芭同意才行。

起初，芭思希芭也认为教堂是陈放尸体过夜的最佳场所。但又想到这么多年来农场一直是范妮唯一的家，她觉得只有把尸体运回农场过夜才是仁慈之举。牧师也说芭思希芭是对的。就这样，棺材被抬进了一间小客厅，放在两张长椅上。加布里埃独自在棺材前站了一会儿。他被事态的发展扰得心烦意乱。虽然他尽了一切努力去保护芭思希芭的感情不受伤害，但她还得忍受情敌的尸体被运回她自己家中的尴尬局面。他想到了芭思希芭发现范妮的那个可怕的秘密时会有多大的痛苦。为了不使芭思希芭太快地得知

这个消息，他把棺材上的最后两个粉笔字擦掉了。那上面原来写着的是“范妮和她的孩子”，但现在棺材上只剩下了她自己的名字。之后，加布里埃平静地离开了那间屋子。

评论： 透过范妮的尸体被生硬地扔到车上的举动，我们又一次看到了这个慈善机构的冷酷无情。他们极有效率地解脱了对范妮的责任，在棺材上轻松地写下了那可怕的几个字，又把死亡登记证轻易地转了手，不加任何考虑。即使在死后，不幸的命运还落到范妮头上：派去接她的是个不负责任的工人。这样，当她躺在棺材里静静等在鹿头酒店门口时，她又忍受了最后一次屈辱。

本章的高潮部分是最有意思的。哈代对情节的安排使读者的注意力全部集中在了棺材和那上面的几个字上。加布里埃善意的举动似乎是既挽救了范妮的名声又保住了芭思希芭平静的心态。但是她们以前的错误和这些错误所引起的后果是不会被轻易抹掉的。

第四十三章
范妮的报复

当天深夜，莉迪和芭思希芭简单地交谈了几句。莉迪主动请求自己守夜等待特罗伊的归来。芭思希芭让她去睡，准备自己在火边等候。她切切实实地感觉到了这种新的孤独和痛苦，她不知道这场悲剧会对她的婚姻有什么影响。莉迪又回来了，她带来了范妮的一些消息，在她的耳边小声说了几句。芭思希芭坚持说棺材上只有一个名字。但听说范妮的孩子也和她一起躺在棺材里时，这消息扰得她夜不能寐。她还不能豁达到忽视这个消息的重要性的程度。想到范妮的命运和自己的不幸，她感到越来越悲哀。如果加布里埃想得到他擦掉棺材的两个字的简单行为会招致她多么犹豫不决和进退两难，他是绝不会有意制造这么大的痛苦的。

芭思希芭决定去向加布里埃询问他所知道的一切。但当她赶到他的小屋外时,她看到他正做完祷告熄了灯。于是她决定自己去看个究竟。她跑到自己的房间里,疯狂地寻找改锥。她打开棺材往里看的时候,她对自己说最好看到最坏的结果。她感到这样侵犯别人的隐私本来是罪该万死的,但这和特罗伊对范妮无耻的抛弃相比就算不上什么了。芭思希芭对着棺材里的那两具尸体哭泣起来。她认识到是范妮赢了,她用她的死占胜了自己。死去的范妮在她心中引起的只有怜悯,没有嫉妒与报复之情。她跪在棺材旁祈祷了一会儿,站起来时灵魂平静了许多。她沿着棺材四周走着,把鲜花撒在了范妮的头上。她这心烦意乱的举动被特罗伊的突然回来打断了。

他好像慢慢明白了这是怎么回事,但还没把尸体与范妮联系起来。芭思希芭想走,但特罗伊问她是谁死了,又把她拽回棺材旁。烛光映出了死去的母亲和孩子。范妮的难言之隐终于真相大白了,这使特罗伊大吃一惊。芭思希芭问他认不认识这姑娘,他承认他认识。看到他对着眼前情景的反应,她的痛苦无以复加。他弯下腰去吻范妮。芭思希芭承受不了这样的痛苦,她求特罗伊不要吻范妮和她的孩子;如果他非要吻她的话,他也该吻吻她,因为她比以往的范妮更爱他。

特罗伊像不认识她一样看着她,他把她一把推开,最后他承认自己有罪,害了范妮。他残酷地告诉芭思希芭,他一直爱着范妮,范妮对他来讲比谁都重要;他对芭思希芭只是一时的迷恋,真正该娶的应该是范妮。他对芭思希芭最猛烈的一击是这样一句话:苍天可以作证,范妮才是他真正的妻子。虽然他和芭思希芭结了婚,但他在精神上并不属于她。芭思希芭心中产生了一阵冲动,她只想从他身边跑开,找个地方藏起来。她冲出房门,跑进了漆黑的夜色之中。

评论: 虽然特罗伊一直在到处寻找范妮,而且他也一直不知

道那孩子的事情，读者可能会因这些原因有点想原谅他，但他铸成的种种大错却使他不可原谅：他对待芭思希芭冷酷无情，他在路上认出了范妮时没有及时帮助她；更有甚者，他没有娶范妮的原因仅仅是因为她没有找到教堂而使他难堪了。

博德伍德的诅咒开始在特罗伊身上应验了，特罗伊此刻比任何时候都更加悲惨、不幸。他对芭思希芭的冷淡和对自己与范妮关系的承认使他失去了与芭思希芭重归于好的最后机会。正如他以前对待范妮的态度一样，他对这一切给芭思希芭的打击毫无同情之心：他现在还可以帮助芭思希芭，但他却帮不了范妮了。也许这正是特罗伊的致命弱点：他的理解和帮助总是来得太迟，或者用得根本不对地方。

第四十四章
树下——反应

芭思希芭在黑暗的路上跑了很久，最后在一片树荫下停下来，疲乏地睡着了。清晨，她被一阵小鸟的鸣叫声和年轻的农夫下地上工时的歌声惊醒了。她看着日出和黎明时身边美丽的田园景色。小学生在上学的路上背诵课文的样子把她逗乐了。突然，她看见了出来找她的莉迪。莉迪告诉她，特罗伊一大早已经走了，范妮的尸体还没运去埋葬。

芭思希芭不想立刻就回去，莉迪给她送来了一些早点和一些保暖的衣物。因为范妮的尸体还没运走，于是两人就在小树林里散起步来。最后，芭思希芭让莉迪回去看看她是否能回家了。莉迪对工人们说芭思希芭在自己房里不想受人打扰。

芭思希芭决定留下来面对她的问题。她没有告诉莉迪是什么样可怕的悲剧毁了她的婚姻。两人回到家中，芭思希芭到一个没人去的阁楼上躲了起来。她一整天都在阁楼里读消遣性的文学作品打

发时光。其实她根本不用躲着特罗伊:因为他一整天都没回来过。太阳开始落山了,芭思希芭看村子里的孩子们玩耍。但突然之间孩子们都不玩了。莉迪又来看她的时候,她问起这件事,莉迪说有人从卡斯特桥运来了一块大墓碑,也许孩子们都跑去看是谁的墓碑了。莉迪又说这件事她也就知道这么多。

评论: 平静的黎明代替了出卖之夜。芭思希芭醒来时迎来了新的一天,这是她的一个崭新的、更成熟的开端。但她藏到阁楼里躲着不想见特罗伊的行为证明这成熟才刚刚开始。

哈代在本章的结尾处提到了墓碑的事,又以此引起了读者的好奇。读者能够猜到这是给范妮的,但这墓碑是谁让人送来的,它又是如何在范妮之后这么短的时间内就运到韦瑟伯里的,这一切我们只有等到下一章才能见分晓。

第四十五章
特罗伊的浪漫之举

芭思希芭跑出去之后,特罗伊把两具尸体盖上,然后到楼上去等待天亮。他在约定的地点一直等范妮,但她没来,又一次让他失望了。他气上心头,于是策马赶到巴德茅斯赛马场,又一直手气不好。他在那儿呆到晚上 9 点钟左右,然后骑上马慢慢地往家走。他开始想也许范妮是病了无法赴约,他后悔没到卡斯特桥去打听一下她的情况。一回去,他就发现了这场悲剧。

天刚刚擦亮,特罗伊就离开了这个家,丝毫没有想到芭思希芭。他在教堂墓地中找到了为范妮新挖的墓穴,然后急急忙忙地赶到卡斯特桥。他找到了一个石匠,让他刻一块豪华的墓碑。他像个孩子一样,让石匠按着 27 英镑的标准刻一块最好的墓碑(这是他身上所有的钱了),这钱本来就是准备给范妮的。他把要刻在墓碑上的字写下来,然后一直在那儿等到墓碑刻好,亲眼看着它被装上马

车即将运往韦瑟伯里。

天黑的时候，他手上提着一只重重的篮子离开了卡斯特桥。路上，他碰到从韦瑟伯里送墓碑回来的那辆马车。听说墓碑已立起来了，他非常满意。虽然这时已是夜里10点钟，但他还是找到了范妮的坟墓，并找了把铁锹和一盏灯。借着灯光，他从篮子里取出了带来的鲜花，把它们细心地、整整齐齐地种在了坟前。他对自己浪漫的举动并不感到愚蠢，而是整夜地干着，直到天下起雨来。他感到疲乏，雨又越下越大，于是想在天亮前把事情干完，然后在教堂门廊中的长椅上睡了起来。

评论： 特罗伊用准备给范妮的钱给她买了一块豪华的大墓碑。这里，哈代那冷酷的幽默是显而易见的。更具讽刺意味的是，这么一个在范妮生前抛弃了她的无情郎在她死后却如此夸张地和她站到了一起。他冲动地为她订制大墓碑的举动使我们又想起他冲动之下把贵重的金表送给芭思希芭的那一幕。他即使是在忏悔之中，举动也依然是那么荒唐可笑。不管特罗伊的悲伤和自责多么深切，读者还是感到这些温柔的举动对范妮来说来得太晚了。特罗伊种花的情节暗示出他那浪漫的、不切实际的天性，但这并不能成为原谅他过去抛弃了范妮和冷酷地拒绝了芭思希芭的理由。

第四十六章
雕像滴水嘴带来的后果

范妮的尸体被埋在了韦瑟伯里的教堂墓地。这是14世纪建起的一座正方形建筑，它的每个角上都装饰着两个奇形怪状的雕像滴水嘴。它们的作用除了装饰之外，还可把房顶上的雨水引流下来。雨水从那些滴水嘴丑恶的面孔上的大嘴巴中哗哗地流出来。每个雕像的面貌形状各不相同，这是和欧洲哥特式建筑艺术相结合的一种不对称艺术。经过多年的风雨侵蚀，有几个滴水嘴已经坏了，

还有的被教堂管事们堵住了。现在只有两个还在使用。

特罗伊睡着的时候,雨还在下着。很快雨水就从还在使用的两个滴水嘴的其中一个中流了下来。大雨使从墙上流下来的雨水形成了一条小溪,流到了范妮的坟旁。为防止水土流失而砌起的那些石头都被暴雨冲开了。由于范妮坟墓所在的角落不常有人去,所以没人知道大雨对坟墓构成的威胁。

凶猛的雨水冲到范妮坟头的松土中,很快就在那儿形成了一个小水洼。特罗伊在那儿精心种上的花都被冲垮了,有些花甚至被冲跑了。

特罗伊已经有两夜没睡了,这使他昏昏沉沉地睡到了大天亮。他醒来时看到眼前的一切呈现出了一片勃勃生机。但当他走到范妮坟前的时候,他发现路上都是泥土,他种的一些花已被冲到了老远的地方。雨水冲平了范妮的坟头;被冲下来的土变成了泥,把新立起的墓碑都弄脏了。所有的花几乎都被冲跑了。

眼前的景象使特罗伊万分伤心。这场大雨像是命运对他的最后一击。这对刚刚经历了前一场悲剧的他无疑是雪上加霜,他再也经受不住了。他有生之中头一次恨起自己来了。他觉得自己悲惨至极,祸事不断。他离开了墓地,也没心思去培培坟上的土,或重新种种那些花。他好像变得六神无主,于是离开了村子。

芭思希芭从阁楼的窗户里看到了教堂墓地中的灯光。早晨,她打开窗户迎接新的一天。莉迪给她送来了早饭,并告诉她加布里埃去查看从教堂房顶的滴水嘴传来的奇怪的声音了。芭思希芭问有没有特罗伊的消息,莉迪说有人看到他去了巴德茅斯。

芭思希芭走到墓地,找到了被毁坏的范妮的坟墓。她和加布里埃注视着那块豪华的墓碑。她伤心地读着的上面的字:“弗兰西

斯·特罗伊为他心爱的范妮·罗宾而立”。

她让加布里埃把坟上的土填好，自己把冲走的花拣回来重新栽上。她叫加布里埃去让教堂管事们把堵上的滴水嘴打开，以免再引起这样的洪水。她的痛苦经历使她不再任性行事了。她怜悯地把墓碑上的泥土擦掉，因为她真心喜欢上边充满感情的那几行字。

评论： 这一刻，命运好像有意在与特罗伊作对，他触到的每样东西都被毁掉了。就连他想弥补对范妮伤害的最后一着都被大自然的力量——一场大雨挫败了。特罗伊从未像加布里埃那样意识到大自然的存在，对“自然界”也没有任何感悟。他所遭受的一切就像是对他无视大自然的报应。他种上的花被冲跑了，他丢弃了它们，也丢弃了韦瑟伯里。

特罗伊并没有从他所遭受的痛苦中吸取什么教训，他还是幼稚地一走了之，把所有的问题都抛在了脑后。他冷酷地丢下芭思希芭，让她独自去面对见到墓碑上的文字时的尴尬情景。而她那擦净墓碑、重整花朵的动作却显示了她的仁爱之心与平静地接受痛苦的勇气。

第四十七章
海边历险

特罗伊被过去几天内遭受的痛苦经历搞得烦恼不堪。他不愿回家面对芭思希芭，于是沿着大路向南走去。下午时分，他发现自己走到了一片把农田与海岸隔开的山脚下。爬到山顶的时候，他看到了眼前浩瀚的大海，山的右边就是巴德茅斯城。这里的景色十分荒凉，除了浪涛拍打海岸之外，一切都是静止不动的。他找到了一个隐蔽的小海湾，想在这里休息一会儿，游个泳再往前走。小海湾的三面都是悬崖绝壁，只有一面临海。特罗伊把衣服放在了水边，就向海里游去。他一边游着，一边想起听人说过这个地方的急流

淹死过不少人。他没命地朝小海湾往回游。四周连条船的影子都没有。他边游边尽量节省体力。当他转向右侧游时，发现了一艘大轮船的小艇，便朝它游去。水手们听到了他的喊声，也朝他的方向划过来。几分钟后，特罗伊被拉到了小艇上。水手们是到岸上来运沙子的，他们把可借的衣服都借给了他，并答应在第二天早晨把他带到海边。天快黑了，他们赶快把小艇向大船划去。四周静悄悄的。唯一能听到的声音就是他们的桨声；唯一能看到的东西就是远处的大船。他们正在向它慢慢靠近。

评论： 特罗伊奇特的命运并没有完全抛弃他。虽然他的得救是作者编出的一个不太高明的情节，但他神秘的失踪和对他回来的期盼在小说的后面起到了吸引读者注意力的作用。

这种让水手们突然出现来营救特罗伊的手法在希腊戏剧里叫"上帝的机器"。一股完全来自故事以外的力量出来救了他。水手和船只在故事情节需要的时候才出现，并不在故事的主要脉络之内，因为这样才能保证主要人物都不知道特罗伊的去向。哈代在这里不得不陷入编故事的俗套，让特罗伊暂时从故事中消失，却还保留着他能回来的希望。

第四十八章
疑窦丛生——挥之不去

芭思希芭听说丈夫失踪了，又吃惊又有松了口气的感觉。她对他能否回来似乎不太关心。这个刚刚经受了耻辱的年轻女人反复思考了他回来的结果：那样她就有可能非得离开韦瑟伯里农场了。她知道，如果她（或者是特罗伊）到 1 月（截止日期）交不上租子，她的处境就不妙了——没有人会替她着想（因为对于她继承这个农场本来就有争议），那时她就又会变得一无所有。她现在看清她的婚姻是个错误，她平静地等待着结果。

特罗伊失踪后的第一个星期天，她去了卡斯特桥的谷物市场。在那里她注意到一个陌生人在找她，并听见他向旁边的人打听她。他问在哪儿能找到特罗伊太太，人们告诉他她就站在离他们不远的地方。芭思希芭耳朵很灵，她听到了下面的话：特罗伊被淹死了。她不禁大惊失色，但又不怎么相信这是真的。她失去了自制力，昏倒在地上。博德伍德用双臂托住了她，问她发生了什么事。别人告诉他特罗伊被淹死在了路尔维德小海湾的附近，前一天有人在那里发现了他的衣服，并把它们送到了巴德茅斯。博德伍德把芭思希芭扶到了一个没人的屋子里让她恢复一下。她苏醒过来，说要回家。

博德伍德离开屋子时心里很高兴，芭思希芭毕竟在他的怀里躺了几分钟。他请了一位妇女照顾她，自己又出去，看看是否能打听到关于这个事故的更多消息。他想让人用马车把芭思希芭送回家去，或者自己亲自驾车把她送回去，但她拒绝了。她感到自己好了一些，便自己赶车回去。到了家中，她立刻上了楼。这时消息已经传到韦瑟伯里了，但她走到自己房间时没有人打扰她，她在屋子里一直呆到了天黑。莉迪问她要不要置办一些丧服，芭思希芭说不用，因为她坚信特罗伊还活着。她在几天之后有迹象证实他确实已死之前一直坚守着这个信念。但是人们一直没有找到他的尸体。

当人们把特罗伊的衣服送回来时，芭思希芭意识到他本来是准备游回来穿这些衣服的。若不是死了，他一定会回来的。她想特罗伊会不会因范妮的死所受的打击太大，因此特意把有预谋的自杀伪装成意外的事故。但她也猜到了另一种更坏的可能性：特罗伊的死还可能是想有意拒绝她。那天夜里，她又仔细地查看了特罗伊的表中珍藏着的那一缕头发，意识到这两个人生时相互拥有、死后也忠贞相守。开始她想把头发烧掉，但最终为纪念范妮还是把它留了下来。

评论： 特罗伊在做出这个感情用事的行动时又没去想它可

能带来的痛苦的后果。他只考虑自己,考虑自己的问题,冷酷地无视了他的失踪会给芭思希芭带来的伤害,无视她此时对他迫切的需要。

而此时的芭思希芭已不是读者在小说的开头认识的那个自私自利、不顾他人的芭思希芭了。她对别人的关心从她对特罗伊死讯的反应上就能体现出来,也从她接受了他与范妮的关系上表现了出来。

第四十九章
奥克的升职——巨大的希望

秋季将尽,冬日来临。芭思希芭平静地生活着,但心情却不平静,她一直为她过去的错误而懊悔着。她毫无兴致地经营着农场。加布里埃也最终被任命为管家,尽管他已经做了很长时间管家的工作。

博德伍德的农场也不景气。他独自一个生活着,还沉浸在往日的烦恼之中不能自拔,以致荒芜了庄稼。他的工人们不停地提醒他要尽场主的责任,但他一直听不进去,直到农场垮掉了。他最终把加布里埃请来,让他在任芭思希芭的管家的同时兼任他的农场管家。加布里埃的命运好像最终要好转了。芭思希芭开始反对他身兼二职,但最后因为两个农场彼此相邻,也就同意了。

加布里埃命运的好转受到了村民们的注意。苏珊·塔尔就是其中一个,她对加布里埃讲究起来的穿着打扮大加评论。与博德伍德的协议使他能够得到一部分经营利润,而不光是固定的工资,从而使他在经济上宽裕了不少。由于他一如既往地过着简朴的生活,有的村民认为他有些吝啬,但加布里埃却坚持不改往日的本色。

虽然博德伍德在过去经历了不少痛苦,但他对自己最终能够得到

芭思希芭还抱着很大的希望。此时的芭思希芭已不是过去玩弄他的感情的那个虚荣的女孩子了。实际上,她所经历的磨难使得她比以往更加美丽、更有魅力了。

芭思希芭到诺柯姆村去看望姑妈,两个月之后才回到农场。她一回来,博德伍德就抓住时机向莉迪打听她的消息。他称赞了她与芭思希芭的亲密关系。莉迪透露说即使芭思希芭再次结婚她们也会继续在一起。博德伍德抓住了这个暗示所提供的微小机会,打听起芭思希芭对于结婚的打算。莉迪说芭思希芭从未谈论过这件事,但她有一次说过她可能会七年后再结婚(这是宣布特罗伊已死的最后法定时间)。博德伍德坚持说不需要等这么长时间。莉迪问他有没有和律师谈过此事,他说没有,之后就匆匆走开了。他为自己的愚蠢、别有用心的举动感到气恼,但他至少得到了些有价值的消息。再等六年确实太长了,但如果最后能够得到的话还是值得的。他要耐心地等到那天的到来,用此来证明:时间改变不了他那忠贞的爱情。

与此同时,那年夏天还举行了格林希尔交易会,韦瑟伯里的人们也常去参加这种交易会。

> **评论:** 博德伍德与加布里埃不同,他还没有学会如何豁达地接受命运的安排。虽然经历了那么多挫折,但他还是依旧渴望得到芭思希芭。这种渴望差不多已经变成了疯狂的迷恋。如果他不能学会控制这种情绪,它注定会毁灭他。
>
> 与他相反,加布里埃却是耐心和容忍的态度。他对芭思希芭一直忠贞不渝,但他已经学会了在痛苦中生活,从不违背自然规律办事。他自己没有什么失误,却经历了许多考验,现在仿佛是苦尽甘来了。

第五十章
羊群交易——特罗伊摸到了妻子的手

格林希尔交易会是一个非常受人欢迎的大会。威塞克斯南部的人们都来参加这个交易会。其间最繁忙的一天就是羊群交易的那天。人们把羊群赶到山顶,用古城堡遗址留下的一些土石堆(人们堆起的小山丘)把羊群圈起来。牧羊人从很远的地方把羊赶到这里,一天要走上 10 到 12 英里的路,夜里就露宿在路边临时租来的地里,还得给走跛了的、累倒了的羊和路途上刚生下的小羊羔特殊的给养。韦瑟伯里农场离这儿不远,但加布里埃得看管着把两群羊合在一起的一大群赶到交易会上。路上他有博德伍德的牧羊人凯尼帮忙,他自己的那条老牧羊犬乔治也跟着他。

山上的另一边,人们支起了一座大帐篷,用来表演一种特殊的、通常是在戏院里表演的马戏。刚刚报出的这个节目叫"皇家马戏团表演的特平的约克之行与黑贝斯之死"。卖完羊的牧羊人和农场主们没有了负担,许多人都到帐篷这边来看戏。拥挤的人群中站着科根和普尔格拉斯。他俩是趁放假休息时间到交易会上等着进去看演出的。两人终于挤进了帐篷,走到靠后的一块被当作化妆间用的狭小空间。在隔出来做男化妆间的地方,他们看到有个年轻人正坐在地上穿靴子,他们认出这人是特罗伊中士。

作者简单介绍了一下特罗伊失踪后的情况。由于救了特罗伊的那条船缺少水手,特罗伊就签约受雇作了船员。但当他回去取衣服时却发现衣服已经不见了。他跟船航行到了美国,在那儿靠教一些体操课(包括剑术、击剑和拳击)来维持生活。当他厌倦了这种生活后,他决定再回到英国,在韦瑟伯里农场寻求一种稳定、安全的生活。他不知道芭思希芭认为他是死了还是活着,但无论如何他都想重新获得原来的地位。但是到了利物浦时他开始担心自己是否会受欢迎,也担心芭思希芭对他会有何态度。另外,他还想到

也许芭思希芭现在已经没有了农场，这样他还得负起照顾她生活的责任。再加上还萦绕在他们两人心中的对范妮的回忆，这些都使他认为仓促回家会引起不愉快。他放慢了行程，途中能找到什么工作就做什么。最后，他加入了一个马戏团当射手。他的天才很快得到了承认。特平的这个节目就是为以他作主角展示他的射击技巧而特意安排的。特罗伊认为这只是个暂时的工作，而且他又不太在意马戏团在哪儿表演，于是有一天他发现他到了离韦瑟伯里不远的格林希尔。

太阳快落山、节目快开始的时候，芭思希芭来到帐篷前。她像所有的其他人一样对演出很好奇，很想来看看。她碰到了博德伍德，他问她的羊是否卖了好价钱。她告诉他，她的羊一赶到会上就脱手了，所以她就有了点空闲。她还要见一个买主，但在见他之前她就来这儿看表演打发时光。芭思希芭问博德伍德知不知道这个特平是什么人，博德伍德说他不太清楚，但他听说科根的一个亲戚好像认识特平的一个朋友。

表演开始了。博德伍德向芭思希芭道歉说耽搁她了，并主动请求去替她买票。看到芭思希芭有些犹豫，他马上又加了一句，说他自己马上要回家了。芭思希芭急着想看演出，又到处找不到加布里埃，于是同意让博德伍德替她买票，并给她找个位子。他替她找好了位子并准备离开时，却发现这个位子特别显眼(因为这是块留出的地方，没有别人坐在这儿)。在演出开始之前芭思希芭成了大家注意的焦点。她尽量利用这个局面，当她向人群看过去时高兴地发现科根和普尔格拉斯也在观众的人群里。

在傍晚金色的阳光中，特罗伊从幕后的缝中向下看去，看见了芭思希芭。虽然他的化妆能遮住他的面孔，但他怕芭思希芭认出他的声音来。他思考着是否出去表演。他对韦瑟伯里能否接受他已变得不那么无所谓了，一是他怕芭思希芭看到他做这么下贱的工作，二是芭思希芭从未这么漂亮过。他情急之下，计上心头，立刻找到

管事的，说观众中有一个是他的债主，为了不被他认出来，他是否可以光表演不出声。管事的同意了，并说观众也许意识不到特罗伊的台词被省略掉了，因为表演主要靠的是动作而不是台词。观众非常喜欢他的表演，普尔格拉斯和科根更是印象深刻，特别是普尔格拉斯，他兴奋地加入到人群中，自愿在节目结束时帮着把贝斯抬下去。多年之后他还不无骄傲地向人夸耀这件事呢。

特罗伊为化妆费尽苦心，他尽量在演出中不被人认出来。但在演下一个节目的时候运气便到头了：他被佩尼威斯认了出来(这个人就是被芭思希芭开除的那个管家，现在已成了芭思希芭的对头)。特罗伊不想理会他，但他担心他回来的消息会传到韦瑟伯里。在正式公开身份之前，他急于想了解芭思希芭的经济状况，所以必须先堵住佩尼威斯的嘴。

天黑了，特罗伊戴上了一副假胡子，到交易会上最大的娱乐帐篷找佩尼威斯。这里布置得非常舒适，有一等座位区和二等座位区，当地酒巴的设施用品在这里应有尽有。特罗伊进去时没找到佩尼威斯，却发现芭思希芭在里边坐在帐篷的帆布墙边。他赶忙走到帐篷外与芭思希芭和博德伍德一起坐的地方相对之处。他从外边能够隐隐地听到从里面传来的她的声音。他悄悄地把帐篷割了个小口，这样就既能看到他们又能听到他们的谈话了。芭思希芭说她等的那个买主没有守约来见她。佩尼威斯来了，他对她说有个秘密的消息要告诉她。她拒绝听他的消息，佩尼威斯就把这消息写在了一张纸条上："你丈夫在这里，我刚刚见到他了。现在谁是傻瓜？"他把纸条叠起来，她不想去接，于是他把它扔到了她腿上，转身走开了。

虽然特罗伊没看到纸条上写的字，但他猜出它和自己的事有关。看到博德伍德把字条拣起来交给芭思希芭时，他诅咒起自己的运气来。芭思希芭把字条从右手转到左手上时(那是离特罗伊较近的一只手)，他从帐篷的小口中伸手过去，闪电般地抓过字条跑掉

了。他急忙回到帐篷前面去找佩尼威斯,听到人们在议论有人竟敢胆大包天地抢劫一位年轻女人。之后他在一群跳舞的人后面看见了佩尼威斯。特罗伊低声向他说了几句话,把他叫了出去。

评论: 这一章中几个线索同时迅速地展开着。特罗伊的回来使得情节变得十分复杂。从这时起,他起到了控制故事结局的作用。

特罗伊身上令人不喜欢的品质在这一章中暴露无遗。他不去关心芭思希芭的经济和感情,他不去告诉她自己平安无事,任她为自己担惊受怕。他回来的主要原因是自私的:起初他只是考虑了自己的生活保障,想重新回来接管农场;后来他又被芭思希芭的美貌与魅力吸引,这种美貌和魅力在法律上是属于他的。联想到范妮死后他的思想状况,他的冷淡似乎是可以原谅的,但对于这一点读者是很难原谅的:他直到弄清芭思希芭还拥有一个兴旺发达的农场时才公开自己身份。

第五十一章
芭思希芭与护卫的交谈

由于普尔格拉斯在娱乐大篷里喝多了,不能赶车送芭思希芭回去,加布里埃也还在忙着设法卖掉博德伍德剩下的羊,所以芭思希芭就同意让博德伍德送她回家。她本想让加布里埃送她,但经历了帐篷中的那场"抢劫"之后她受了惊吓,觉得有博德伍德的陪伴也很不错了。另外,她也觉得拒绝对她一直忠心不渝的博德伍德的帮助也确实不够友善。

博德伍德在她的马车旁策马前行。他们聊着交易会和农场经营的话题。博德伍德突然问起她想不想有一天再次结婚。她被他的突然发问弄糊涂了,勉强回答说她还没有认真考虑过这件事,而且她丈夫是否真的已死这件事到现在还没有被绝对证实。

博德伍德告诉她，他很后悔失去了她，并问起她现在对他的看法，说如果找到特罗伊确实已死的证据，她就该尽快嫁给他，以弥补这件事给他带来的伤害。她拒绝讨论这件事的可能性，因为要想再结婚，不论和谁她都得等到法定的特罗伊死后七年的期限满了之后。博德伍德请求她接受自己，芭思希芭最终同意了：圣诞节时她会同意，如果到第七年底特罗伊还不回来的话，她就嫁给他。

评论： 芭思希芭答应满足博德伍德迫切的愿望是出于补偿心理和道义之感。她认识到自己愚蠢的行为给他造成了莫大的痛苦。她尽管自己不爱他，但只有嫁给他才能偿还自己犯下的"罪行"。芭思希芭在与特罗伊的婚姻中尝尽了不幸的苦果，这使她认为幸福对她而言根本就不存在。但如果她报答了他长期的忠贞不渝，补偿了给他带来的诸多麻烦，她至少还可以使他幸福。

第五十二章
事态在收拢

这一章分几个部分。

(1)

在小韦瑟伯里农场，博德伍德准备了一个盛大的圣诞节晚会，这很出乎邻居们的意料。从准备的情况来看，这晚会一定会开得喜气洋洋。整个房子都点缀着圣诞节的饰物；厨房的炉火整日不熄，为客人们准备足够的佳肴。地板已经为跳舞腾出来了；两个男人把一大块木头抬到长厅中为客人们取暖用。但晚会好像缺点什么，因为主人把组织招待工作都交给了别人（这是个原本就不怎么适应这种娱乐活动的孤独的人），被请来的客人们觉得在这个家中有些不自然。

(2)

芭思希芭穿戴好准备去参加晚会，她告诉莉迪说她是不得已才去的，因为她事先已经告诉博德伍德圣诞节她“有事要出去”。她又紧张又害怕，意识到开晚会一定有什么原因。沮丧之中，她甚至希望如果她从未见到过韦瑟伯里就好了。她坚持要穿上黑色的丧服去参加舞会，以此平常的装束来表明她的不情愿之情。

芭思希芭感到有一个比她更强的意志会强迫她，让她不得不答应嫁给博德伍德。圣诞节越来越近，她也越来越为自己的困境感到心焦、困惑。一天，她碰见了加布里埃，把自己的心事告诉了他。加布里埃说博德伍德是永远不会忘记她的。芭思希芭也同意他的看法，说如果她不做出这个保证，博德伍德一定会发疯的。他一生的健康幸福都取决于她了。

加布里埃告诉她，这桩婚姻不会错，但又补充说自己认为如果她不爱他，和他结婚就是罪恶的。芭思希芭却说她一定要补偿她那残酷的玩笑造成的后果。她要担负起这个责任，把这桩婚姻看作是一种还债的方式。她虽然能在别的事情上听进别人的意见，但听不进别人对爱情的看法，于是从加布里埃身边走开了。

她把心里的想法都坦率地告诉了加布里埃，也没指望加布里埃会用别的方式对她的话做出反应。但对于加布里埃没有表示想和她结婚，她还是感到有些失望。她还是希望他再次提起他对她的爱意。她因而对他不带任何感情色彩的建议还是感到有些气恼。

(3)

韦瑟伯里农场里，博德伍德有生以来第一次精心地打扮了一番。一位从卡斯特桥赶来的裁缝帮他试穿一件新外衣，博德伍德也从未这么挑剔过。当他终于满意了时，加布里埃进来向他报告了事情的进展。博德伍德让他把晚上的气氛搞得尽量快乐、热闹些。

他把自己巨大的希望告诉了加布里埃，也告诉他自己怕会发生什么事把这快乐夺走。他在怎么系领带这种小事上征求加布里埃的意见，然后又问他女人的许诺能否靠得住。

加布里埃安慰他说，如果一个女人想弥补自己给他带来的伤害，那么她的许诺就是可靠的。博德伍德说他得到的并不是一个绝对肯定的保证。但他相信她今晚会同意和他订婚。当加布里埃提醒他说要结婚得等到第七年底时，博德伍德不耐烦地数了数特罗伊失踪后已经过去的时间，他说他只要再等上五年零九个月零几天就行了。加布里埃温和地指出，芭思希芭还太年轻，他不能太依赖她的保证，但博德伍德不相信他还会像上一次那样陷入可怕的失望之中。他敢肯定，如果芭思希芭答应嫁给他，她就一定会守诺的。

(4)

特罗伊在白鹿酒馆和彭尼威斯见面了。彭尼威斯还未来得及向律师询问特罗伊回来后在法律上的权力。特罗伊肯定自己没有任何触动法律的地方，但这位当日的管家却指出，他的欺骗行为已经使他成了一个流浪汉，很可能会因为他的抛弃行为受到惩罚。虽然特罗伊对这种说法不屑一顾，但他还是有点担心。他问起芭思希芭和博德伍德之间的关系，彭尼威斯却没有发现什么。他只知道博德伍德要举行一个晚会，芭思希芭会参加。人们都说自从上次的交易会之后他俩一直没见过面，而且她对他也很冷淡。

特罗伊对彭尼威斯说她是个了不起的女人，并告诉他自己很高兴很快就能向她公开自己的身份了。他向彭尼威斯打听自己经过农场的时候她的表情如何，彭尼威斯说她就像没他这个人存在似地看了他一眼，然后继续看人们做苹果汁。当彭尼威斯告诉他加布里埃在管理着两个农场时，特罗伊说也许加布里埃会觉得与芭思希芭不好打交道。彭尼威斯不同意他的看法，他说是芭思希芭太多地依赖加布里埃，加布里埃却还是很独立的一个人。特罗伊告诉彭尼威斯，如果他肯帮助自己，自己会帮他与芭思希芭重归于

好。此刻，特罗伊已经开始为他晚上要干的事情做准备了。

(5)

芭思希芭还是不想去参加舞会，她希望自己长得不是这么漂亮。莉迪告诉她，她还和一年多以前依靠特罗伊时一样迷人。她说芭思希芭对晚会的紧张心情使她更加美丽了。她问芭思希芭，如果博德伍德让她和他一起私奔她会怎么办。芭思希芭提醒她说自己还要等上好几年才能结婚呢，并说如果有一天她最终结了婚，那也是出于人们想像不出的理由。她回答完就去参加晚会了。

(6)

博德伍德对加布里埃说他所得的利润和他所做的工作比起来太小了，他自己想从农场的管理工作中退出来，让加布里埃最终全面掌管农场的工作。他对芭思希芭所抱的希望使他觉得整个世界都明亮了许多，他想把自己的幸福与加布里埃分享。加布里埃劝他不要把事情安排得太早，因为他以前就曾经失望过。博德伍德说加布里埃是对的，他认为加布里埃对芭思希芭的忠诚超出了雇工对雇主应有的程度。他自己想对这位失败的对手表示友谊与尊敬。加布里埃安慰他说自己能经受住这种痛苦，然后离开了兴奋得发烧的博德伍德。加布里埃担心，感情的浪潮已经把博德伍德完全变成另一个人了。

博德伍德呆在自己的屋子里，神情非常严肃。他拿出一个小盒子，把它打开，凝视着一个女式钻石戒指。他盯着这只新戒指看了好一阵。一阵马车声才使他合上盒子并把它仔细地放在了口袋里。看到芭思希芭还没来，他很失望。虽然他把自己的感情埋藏得很好，没有表现出来，但显然他除了为客人的到来兴奋之外，还为着什么别的原因兴奋不已。

(7)

特罗伊把一件带披肩的大衣穿在身上，又戴上了副高高的领子，这

领子和头上那顶被拉得很低的帽子连到了一起。这么打扮好之后，他问彭尼威斯他是否能被认出来。彭尼威斯说他的“化妆”很好，又问他为什么不给芭思希芭写信。实际上，他觉得特罗伊没有妻子的日子会过得更好。特罗伊生气地说自己损失了芭思希芭大笔的财富。自从他在交易会上看到她后，他就下定决心要回到她身边；而且如果不是彭尼威斯提醒他法律方面的问题的话，他现在可能已经回到了她的身边了。现在就是想不去也太晚了，因为他已经在村子边被人看见并被人认出来了。他对自己的逃跑感到很生气，但他对自己在晚会上的出现会引起的戏剧性的效果又感到高兴。突然，一阵死亡的预感袭上了他的心头。

彭尼威斯意识到特罗伊与芭思希芭的和好对他可能意味着命运的改变，可能变好也可能变坏。于是，他对芭思希芭的评论不再那么刻薄了，对特罗伊的吩咐也变得言听计从。特罗伊走了出去，他要在 9 点钟之前赶到博德伍德的晚会上。

> **评论：** 哈代在这一章中运用了一种颇有趣味的写作手法：他把七个小部分串成了一个长长的章节，这使读者有机会在三个不同的场合分别看到博德伍德、特罗伊和芭思希芭三处情节的发展。与此同时，作者从对一个人物的描写跳到对另一个人物的描写，这也使故事情节一直悬而未决。本章在最激动人心的一刻嘎然而止。读者被三个人分别为晚会所做的不同准备带到了故事的最高潮。哈代使得读者欲罢不能地急于了解这些准备工作究竟会带来什么结果。

第五十三章
巧合——季节三女神的纪念

当客人们走进博德伍德家时，开门关门时里面映出的灯光照在一群议论着特罗伊回来的人群身上。人们一致认为芭思希芭不知道他的归来，他们猜测着特罗伊是想躲着芭思希芭还是想伤害她。

有个人好像同情芭思希芭，但另一个人说她和这样一个人纠缠在一起简直是傻瓜。这时雅各布·斯莫伯里走了过来，他认出这群人中有的是博德伍德的工人。拉班·塔尔加入到他们的谈论中，他要他们不要声张特罗伊回来这件事，因为这样会伤害芭思希芭，不管这消息真实与否。他坚持说芭思希芭对特罗伊一直都很公平，只有亨尼利那种人不同意他的看法。

正当工人们站在那里各自想着心事时，博德伍德开门沿小路走了过来。一个工人说博德伍德可能会因为他们来晚了而不高兴。听了这话大家都默不作声了。博德伍德在院子里大声地诉说他对芭思希芭的希望和她长久以来不给他回音给他带来的折磨。大家都不愿偷听到这些私人感情的流露，同时又都可怜博德伍德，尤其是特罗伊现在又回来了。特罗伊的出现似乎给大家带来了很多不快。工人们晚上欢乐的情绪被破坏了，于是他们决定先去华伦的麦芽作坊，过会儿再回博德伍德家。

走近麦芽作坊时，他们发现特罗伊正从窗口向里面张望，显然他是想偷听加布里埃和老酿酒师的谈话。老人正在议论博德伍德的晚会。他说这都是为芭思希芭开的，并说博德伍德这样对待一个不爱他的女人真是个傻瓜。人们又赶忙回到了晚会上。大家推举塔尔向芭思希芭报告此事，但塔尔不愿去破坏晚会的气氛。

芭思希芭毕竟还是个年轻姑娘，她在晚会上玩得很开心，但在这么一种情况下开这个晚会又破坏了她的好心情。她原本打算就呆一个小时，时间一到她就准备离开了。博德伍德请求她答应到法定的期限后嫁给他。在他答应了这段时间之内不再给她任何压力之后，她才给了他那等待已久的保证。他要她收下那枚戒指，她没同意，因为她不想公开此事。但他坚持要她就戴这一晚，她在他那坚决的态度面前让步了。她走到最后一个台阶时停下来想最后再看一眼欢乐的晚会场面，但发现客人们三五一群地在议论着什么新闻。博德伍德愉快地向他们打听议论什么，但大家都不愿告诉他。

正当大家想派拉班去告诉芭思希芭这件事时，有人禀报说来了一位陌生人，他要找特罗伊太太。博德伍德让他传话给陌生人，请他也来参加晚会。这时特罗伊走了进来。知道他回来的人都认出了他。芭思希芭被惊呆了，她只能站在原地呆呆地盯着这位不速之客。博德伍德还没有认出特罗伊，他依然满面笑容地欢迎他，但特罗伊的一阵难听的大笑暴露了他的身份。

特罗伊转身面对芭思希芭，让她跟自己回家。芭思希芭不是太害怕就是太吃惊，站在那里动弹不得。一个与往日的博德伍德的声音完全不同的声音让她跟着丈夫回去。特罗伊上前去拉她，她往后一躲。在她一声尖叫之后响起了一声枪声。疯子一样的博德伍德开枪打死了特罗伊。他还想开枪自杀，却被工人们拦住了。博德伍德冲向芭思希芭，吻了吻她的手，然后在大家还未反应过来去拦他之前冲进了黑暗里。

评论： 这一章也称得上是全书的高潮，因为从这章起，后面的情节就开始“走下坡路”了。这里是兴奋与紧张的最高点。博德伍德是特罗伊回来之后发生的一切事情的导演。在完成了自己在芭思希芭故事中的作用之后，他退到了场外。

哈代为了使读者接受博德伍德开枪杀人这一行为，在前面已做了许多精心的铺垫。他几次暗示出博德伍德已丧失了理智，并多次重申博德伍德已经变了一个人。事实上，就连芭思希芭都害怕如果她不接受他，他就会变成疯子。特罗伊也曾经向科根打听过博德伍德家是否有精神病史。这个打死特罗伊的情节也正是哈代小说中各个情节都环环相扣的技巧的绝好例证：有时看似没有什么特别意义的情节在后面就突然变成了十分重要的事件的导火线。在这部小说的情节的推进过程中，哈代从未滥用任何一个细节。

第五十四章
震惊之后

博德伍德清醒地迈着坚定、沉稳的步子到警察局自首去了。这场灾难迅速在村子里传开了。加布里埃在博德伍德走后几分钟内就赶到了现场，他看到客人们一个个疑惑不解、惊魂不定。芭思希芭平静地把特罗伊的尸体抱在怀里，她让加布里埃去请医生，虽然这已经太晚了。加布里埃被她平静的话语中的威力震慑住了，赶快跑去请医生。当他把医生请来时，人们告诉他芭思希芭已经把特罗伊的尸体运回她的农场了。医生听了很生气，因为他得检查一下尸体，不希望有人挪动它。他们跟着去了韦瑟伯里农场，莉迪告诉他们说芭思希芭和尸体都在楼上。他们发现芭思希芭已经给尸体穿戴整齐，准备下葬了。医生表示他很钦佩她那钢铁般坚强的意志，可正说着她就昏了过去——她再也承受不住这种压力了。医生的注意力开始转移到了芭思希芭身上。她一直喃喃地遣责自己，说一切都是她的过错。莉迪一整夜都陪伴、照顾着她。

评论： 在前面兴奋、紧张的一章之后，这一章是一个舒缓的松驰片断。情节的发展慢了下来，人物的活动也都是平静的，就连对话也像葬礼中轻声吹出的乐曲一样成了悄悄话。这个停顿的目的是为了让读者在继续读下面的故事之前先“喘口气”。

第五十五章
第二年的3月——芭思希芭·博德伍德

第二年的3月，一群人站在雅尔伯里的小山坡上，等待着西部巡回审判团两位法官中的一位的到来。法官将在这里换车，然后在这群人的簇拥之下赶往卡斯特桥。只有韦瑟伯里农场的人们没有跟着一起去。他们谈论着即将进行的这次审判，一致同意呆在家里，

不去打扰博德伍德。第二天,他们急切地等着传来的消息。

与此同时,那天下午又有了一些发现。这对解释博德伍德的精神状况很有帮助。这也使村民们暂时不再光想着那场审判了。自那场交易会以来,人们就怀疑博德伍德的精神崩溃了,特别是加布里埃和芭思希芭对此更是怀疑已久。从一个锁着的壁橱中发现了博德伍德精神失常的证据,它们证明博德伍德是由于爱情和对失去爱情的恐惧逼疯的。他从 9 月开始一直到圣诞节都在不停地置办着衣物、裘皮服装和首饰。他把它们仔细地包起来,并在注着离现在还有六年之隔的一个日期的包裹上写下了"芭思希芭·博德伍德"的字样。

加布里埃从法庭回来了。他告诉大家博德伍德被判处有罪,并被判了死刑。博德伍德精神不稳定的说法也被越来越多的人承认了;一旦有人提起精神失常这个说法,大家就都回忆起了许多可以证实这一点的事例。因此,大家起草了一份递交给地方书记官的请愿书,上面列举了所有这样的事例。关注博德伍德命运的人们都在上面签了字。

在韦瑟伯里,人们焦急地等待着请愿书的结果,但直到星期五下午执行枪决之前还没有消息。加布里埃到监狱和博德伍德道别,他看到木匠们正在制造行刑用的平台。加布里埃没能带回任何好消息。他让拉班·塔尔骑马去卡斯特桥,在那儿至少等到晚上 11 点钟,因为如果到那时减刑命令还不到的话,那就不会有机会了。莉迪希望芭思希芭能免遭看到博德伍德被处死的痛苦。她现在的身体比圣诞节时好些了,但博德伍德的死她还是承受不住的。

拉班去了卡斯特桥。到了晚上 11 点,芭思希芭的多数工人都到路上等他。加布里埃的理智告诉他博德伍德应该死,但他十分可怜这个曾经那么让人敬重的人。最后,拉班终于回来了,他告诉大家博德伍德被减刑了,他将在监狱里服"随意在押"之刑。这下大家

放心了。科根高兴地喊了起来,大家都觉得这是善良占胜了邪恶的结果。

评论: 如果让博德伍德为特罗伊的死而遭受严厉的惩罚,那就既不合情也不合理了。博德伍德得到的缓刑并不是由于作者再次使用了“上帝的机器”的手法,因为他精神失常的种种迹象在情节的发展过程中作者是细心地留过许多伏笔的。如果他被处以死刑,那么他所遭受的惩罚就不是“量罪而定”的了。

第五十六章
孤独中的美人——最终的结果

到了春天,芭思希芭恢复了许多,但她还只是一个人呆在房间里,不见任何人,就连莉迪也安慰不了她。快到夏天的时候她出去的次数多了起来,而且开始对农场的事情有了兴趣。一天晚上她来到村子里,这是自圣诞节以来她第一次进村子。当她走进教堂墓地、走到范妮坟前时,她听到唱诗班在练唱。在范妮墓碑上原有的字下面又多出了这样几行字:“在这座墓里还安息着前面提到过的弗兰西斯·特罗伊。他于18—年12月24日去世,享年26岁。”

当她看这几行字时,管风琴师又开始弹奏另一首乐曲。芭思希芭走到教堂前面,听到人们唱到《引路吧,仁慈地照亮我们》的歌词时,她不知为何被歌词感动得哭了。歌词对她好像有特别深刻的意义。她没有注意到加布里埃走了过来,他说他也是来练唱的。她转身想走,他又和她多聊了几句。她告诉他自己是来看那块墓碑的,又说从圣诞节到现在好像已经过了许多年。

两人开始往回走。加布里埃告诉她自己打算在来年春天离开英国到加利福尼亚去。芭思希芭说她自己已经依靠他那么长时间了,没有他在身边自己该怎么办。但是无论她怎么恳求,他都是去意

已定了。

芭思希芭觉得这又是一桩令她痛苦不堪的灾难,因为这使她相信她已经失去了加布里埃的爱。在这之后的三个星期里,她又注意到他对身边的事情明显地不感兴趣了。他很少到农场来,而且如果有事需要她的指示时,他也总是让人送张字条来。整整一个秋天,甚至一直到圣诞节之前,她都沉浸在即将失去加布里埃的悲伤之中,这种悲伤已压过了她对令人心碎的上个圣诞节的记忆。圣诞节后的第二天,加布里埃送来了一张纸条,告诉她自己要在下一个女士节那天(3 月 25 日)结束他与她之间的合同。

芭思希芭情不自禁地对着信大哭起来。她一直把加布里埃看作是生活中的支柱。一想到要失去最可信赖的朋友,她倍感凄凉,于是在太阳落山后不久走进了加布里埃的家。她对这次见面心里很是忐忑不安,也不知道就这么跑到一个单身汉家里拜访是否妥当,尽管这人是自己的管家。加布里埃出来迎接她时也很不自然。芭思希芭对他倾诉了自己心中对他即将离去感到的悲哀,并且问他自己是不是得罪了他。他解释说他并不是要离开英国,5 月 1 日起他还要接管小韦瑟伯里农场。他本来是想继续当她的管家的,但有些风言风雨会毁了她的名誉:有人说加布里埃是在等着接管博德伍德的农场,目的是想最终得到芭思希芭。芭思希芭听了这些很吃惊,她说这个说法太荒唐,这么想也太快了。他抓住了“太荒唐”这几个字,说是这么回事,他也绝不想娶她。这句话刺伤了她,她眼泪汪汪地说她只是说结婚这件事对她来讲是太快了。他温柔地说如果知道有一天他会和她结婚,那情况就不同了。她说他永远也不会知道,因为他不会问的。她又提醒他说,她是他的第一个心上人。加布里埃为她产生了自己已不爱她了的想法感到遗憾,因为他的本意只是想让人们别再议论他们。

要起身回家的时候,她告诉他自己很高兴来了这么一趟,消除了他俩之间的误解。她还说她来的这一趟好像是向他来求婚的。加布

里埃说本来就该是这样的，因为他说过他不会再向她提起求婚这件事了；他已经耐心地等了她这么久了，她不应该为来他这儿一趟就抱怨。他把她送回家去，路上他们没有说什么甜言蜜语，只是聊起了他要经管的农场。他们之间没有山盟海誓地表达爱情的必要，因为他们的爱情建立在志趣相投、相互信任、风雨同舟的基础之上，它已超过了表面上的相互迷恋和两情相悦。

评论： 这一章中情节的发展正好适合全书欢乐的气氛。加布里埃耐心的等待得到了报答。读者还记得他发过誓再也不向芭思希芭提求婚的事了。他的话是在提醒她，他的这种做法没有责备她的意思，只表明他认为他们两人最终就该是这样的结局。这一段也表明了芭思希芭已经不再是先前的那个虚荣的年轻姑娘了。这个新的芭思希芭已经不再骄傲了，她接受了加布里埃。不仅如此，她还主动提起了这桩婚事。

他们之间没有说"甜言蜜语"的必要，这一点暗示了他们的婚姻一定会天长地久。这个情形和芭思希芭前一次婚姻的情形完全相反。那一次的婚姻在很大程度上是建立在甜言蜜语与感情冲动之上的。

第五十七章
浓雾弥漫的夜晚与黎明——大结局

在芭思希芭拜访了加布里埃之后不久，两人就计划结婚的事宜了。几天后，加布里埃遇见了科根，两人一起向村子里走去。加布里埃说他要去找拉班(不久前他被任命为教堂执事)。他最终向科根透露了他和芭思希芭第二天早晨就要结婚的消息，并且希望科根替他们保守这个秘密。

科根只是对他要求对这件事保密感到吃惊，因为他想到这桩婚姻已经有一段时间了。科根提醒他说塔尔的太太会把这事在教区传

出去，所以请求让自己去把拉班叫出来见加布里埃。苏珊说拉班不在家，但是最后加布里埃让科根对她说，请拉班第二天到教堂见芭思希芭。科根又补充道，这件事与她和另一个长期与她一起均摊股份的农民之间的合同有关。这样，他们到牧师家的拜访就少了不少麻烦，也没有引起任何好奇。

芭思希芭这一夜睡得很少。她在被叫醒之前早早地就起了床。她只告诉莉迪说加布里埃要来吃午饭。当莉迪开始担心她的声誉时，她才小声地对莉迪说了实情。这天早上，天气潮湿沉闷，但是两人却是平生第一次手挽着手、高高兴兴地出发了。芭思希芭穿得很朴素，但是幸福使她容光焕发。加布里埃说她的发式还和他第一次见到她时的一样，这说明她才 24 岁，并不老，而且现在的她和他在诺柯姆的小山上见到的她并不是完全不同。

教堂里只有莉迪、拉班和教区牧师。两个人悄悄地结了婚。加布里埃搬到了芭思希芭家里，这是个非常切合实际的安排。当芭思希芭为加布里埃倒茶时，他们听到了一声炮响，然后是鼓乐齐鸣。村民们来祝贺新婚了，鼓乐声是韦瑟伯里的乐队演奏出的。加布里埃请马克·克拉克、简·科根和其他人进来喝一杯，但他们说他们会很快再来拜访他们两人的，现在最好还是把酒送到华伦的麦芽作坊去。加布里埃对芭思希芭的一个随意的称呼——“我妻子”——给快乐的村民留下了很深的印象：他听上去不像是个新郎，倒像一个结婚已久的丈夫。加布里埃和芭思希芭两人都被他们正要离去的朋友的玩笑逗乐了。

评论： 故事的结局圆满得不能再圆满了：芭思希芭和加布里埃一块过上了幸福快乐、平静安宁、天长地久的生活。他俩都经历了许多磨难，也都从中学到了不少东西，他们完全有权得到幸福。芭思希芭本来没有想到要在婚姻中找到快乐，但她最终是为了爱情才结婚的，而不是因为表面的相互吸引，也不是为了赎罪。小说最初出现的和最后一位出现的人物都是

加布里埃。他开始小有成就，经历了失败，最后又幸福快乐，前程似锦。他会积极地响应村民们的说法：这是在华伦的麦芽作坊中喝酒庆祝的最令人高兴的一件事。

小说以村民中最惹人喜爱的人物普尔格拉斯的话来结束是最恰当不过的了，因为小说本身就是田园小说，村民们在小说的发展过程中起到了重要的作用。特别是普尔格拉斯，他因贪杯而造成的失误为芭思希芭成熟起来、找到幸福提供了必不可少的契机。

人物分析

加布里埃·奥克： 从出场的那一刻起，加布里埃就是一个对现代化的发展和徒有其表的东西不感兴趣的人。他的穿着打扮也与他的兴趣爱好一样朴素而传统。

他不信任大机器社会和人造的世界，他所信赖的只有大自然。他的名字也象征了他与大自然之间的亲密关系。

他对芭思希芭的忠诚表现在他对她耐心的容忍与接受上面：既接受她的错误，也接受她需要逐渐成熟的事实。他的责任感与从事农活的技术都使她暗暗地信赖他。但是，尽管加布里埃多才多艺，他却一点也不狂妄自大，他清楚人的命运变幻莫测(就像他自己生活中经历的一样)。因此，他不因博德伍德在剪羊毛庆祝会上占了他的位子而恼恨对方。无论是福是祸他都毫无怨言地坦然接受。甚至在最困难的时刻，他也能笑对人生，这一点从他在求职市场上求职失败后吹起笛子的情节中就可以体现出来。

加布里埃全部的优秀品质可以归纳为：他既能平静地接受自己的天赋，又能平静地接受自己能力的局限性。他清楚自己的能力能达到什么程度，所以绝不去追求自己力不能及的目标从而使得自己不快乐。他尊重自己，把自己当作一个人、一个独立的人来看待；他的自尊又使得村民们钦佩他，敬重他。他们不嫉妒他的成就，认为那是他的劳动所得、财富是对他公平的奖赏。

他既有道德标准又十分正义：他知道博德伍德因枪杀特罗伊该受到惩罚，但他的同情心又驱使他盼望博德伍德得到减刑。他无法违背自己的意志去欺骗芭思希芭，也不愿对她阿谀奉承。他回答她的询问时只是真诚而坦率地表达自己的看法，尽管这样做的代价是无法博得她的好感。这种“正义”感使他拒绝了她第一次请求

他抢救羊群的要求，也迫使她主动提出他们最终的联姻。

芭思希芭： 芭思希芭的美貌与魅力赢得了大多数人的喜欢，甚至包括清楚她的缺点的加布里埃。她在精神上是完全独立的，行动上也有自己的一套。但不幸的是，这美好的品质在小说的开头是以骄傲和虚荣的形式出现的。但我们应该记得，那时的芭思希芭还是个小姑娘。她逐渐成熟的过程和经历的磨难减少了她身上的缺点，磨砺出了一个既有个性又自尊自强的、令人钦佩的女性。

起初她的性格有些急躁，碰事不顾后果(例如她给博德伍德写了那张愚蠢的情人卡)。她喜欢别人崇拜她，逢迎她，因此成了特罗伊最好的猎物。他正是用甜言蜜语和令人眼花缭乱的剑术迷惑了她。

她像孩子一般喜怒无常，突然的发作常常使可怜的莉迪手足无措，但是，她为自己缺乏自控能力的真诚道歉又能补偿这一切。正如莉迪所说，她为特罗伊的辩解是十分女性化的行为；她突然想得到邻家农场主的敬慕的欲望也是出于女性的心理(这使她设法去得到博德伍德的注意)。她突然之间继承了叔叔的遗产，得到一座农场，这使她有机会去施展她渴望指挥别人、渴望得到尊敬的孩子般的愿望。但她最终认识到，她必须以善良和理解为基础才能使用好这个权威的地位所赋予她的权力。

在她成熟起来之后，她开始真诚地关心他人，并学会了珍惜一些重要的东西，如和加布里埃之间的友谊。她对范妮的仁爱也是她成熟的又一标志。尽管她对特罗伊与范妮之间的关系倍感失望，她却十分周到、友善地料理了范妮的后事。

这就是哈代对她最好的评价："她是可以成为伟人之母的那种女人。"

博德伍德： 博德伍德表面上是个含蓄、稳重、冷漠的人，但在他的内心却潜藏着一个灾难性的感情漩涡。在芭思希芭的挑逗之下，它终于迸发了出来。

作为一个被邻里都视为“绅士”的人，博德伍德就像爱德华·阿灵顿·罗宾逊诗中的理查德·科里一样，是个典型的见到邻居打招呼时都“紧张得冒汗”、却从不与他们来往的那种人。当博德伍德准备举办一次晚会时，村民们无不为之惊讶。但是读者知道，从他在剪羊毛庆祝会上和芭思希芭一起唱歌的那一刻起，他就不再冷漠了。

他对芭思希芭的爱表现为一种疯狂地想占有她的欲望。他一味地沉迷于这个欲念之中，以致丧失了理智；他听任农场垮下去，并对一个陌生人(加布里埃)倾吐了自己的烦恼，因此“降低了”他在自己心目中的地位。当芭思希芭一度来到他的身边时，他那疯狂的喜悦和害怕再次失去她的恐惧之情使得他的工人们都不由得可怜起来他来。

他的这种沉迷使他暗自欣喜地为芭思希芭买了许多礼物，包括一个贵重的戒指。但他没有意识到，他自私的决定与对公正的渴求是在逼迫芭思希芭接受一桩令她讨厌的婚姻。她被他那感情的力量和他在她心中引起的负疚之感压得透不过气来。假若他们真的结了婚，那么芭思希芭一定会被痛苦摧毁，博德伍德也会因得到了芭思希芭而从梦中醒来。

但人们对博德伍德还保存着一些尊敬和同情之心，这是用他的真诚、善良与以往作为农场主时的责任心而赢得的。可悲的是，为他签名写减刑请愿书的没有几个是他真正的朋友，只有那些为他工作、真正关心他的命运的人们才这么做了。村民们特意没去出席他的审判，却又都焦急地等待着他的消息。他们心中的这个人是以前的博德伍德，而不是现在的这个疯子。他们真心地关注着这

个已经变得面目全非的人的命运。

特罗伊： 若不是特罗伊为范妮的死、也为自己对她的冷酷无情表示出真心的忏悔，那么他简直就是个彻头彻尾的恶棍。如果说芭思希芭的成熟超越了她以前的莽撞任性的话，那么特罗伊却一直没能成熟起来。他恶作剧般地撞入博德伍德的晚会想找回芭思希芭，却丝毫没有考虑到她的感受。这和他亲吻完范妮与孩子的尸体之后只字未留就一走了之的行为何其相似。

与加布里埃相反，他从不满足，却一直寻求不到内心的平静与安宁(从他在韦瑟伯里农场成为农场主的第一天早上开始他就打算改造这个农场，使其"现代化")。就像他的剑术一样，他的为人也只是表面上令人着迷，但内心却既浅薄又空虚。更有甚者，他欺骗女性时丝毫不感到内疚与羞耻。在没有弄清用不用担负芭思希芭的生活费用之前，他决不肯牺牲一点自己的利益来尽快结束芭思希芭的痛苦。这种行为几乎可以称得上卑鄙无耻。

他与芭思希芭一样标榜独立与自由，但不同于芭思希芭的是，他看不到这种独立背后的责任。他享受着他作为农场主拥有的权力，但对他而言这只是他扮演的一个角色。他对工人们的利益毫不关心，对农场的兴衰也不闻不问。

诚然，在拒绝与博德伍德做"交易"那件事上他是令人敬佩的。但是如果他事先没有和芭思希芭结婚(如果他没有得到经济上的保障的话)，他很可能就会把博德伍德的钱当作是与范妮结婚的"奖赏"接受了下来，这正是他最初的打算。

评　论

总体评价：《远离尘嚣》很难称得上是哈代最伟大的作品。它充其量只可称为一本展示了英国乡村宁静的田园生活的、令人愉快的消遣书。想在这本书平静的田园背景和设计精巧的情节之外寻找到更多内涵的评论家们大多会失望的。亨利·詹姆斯就是一个例子。他在指责哈代的同时却忽略了小说中的一些很重要的东西。与之相反，拉塞尔·艾伯克龙比却更能理解哈代的田园风光的真正含义、欣赏他对大自然的描写与对"村民群像"的喜剧性的刻画。他认为这是对乡村生活的真实描写，带有浓厚的莎士比亚风格。

在现代的评论家眼中，这部小说在哈代所有的小说中要么是不引人注意的一部，要么就是因其成就(如对乡村生活的描写)或不足(如对情节的过份追求)得到的评价都大致相同。但无论如何，这些现代的评论家都一致认为哈代是一位"优秀的过渡性的小说家"。

哈代的漫长的一生跨越了维多利亚和现代两个时期，这两个时期在他的小说中都有所体现。正如阿尔伯特·格拉德所说，哈代在精心编织故事情节方面是位传统的小说家，但在对人物心理发展的兴趣和用小说反映一些现代问题方面，他颇具现代意识。这在后来的一些小说家的作品中也是至关重要的内容。格拉德还指出，在以小说的形式探索象征和讽喻手法的运用方面，哈代也是一位先驱。格拉德和莫顿·扎贝尔一致认为哈代的作品为后来的乔伊斯、普鲁斯特、纪德和卡夫卡的作品铺平了道路。

令人惊奇的是，哈代在热爱、尊崇英国乡村古老的、伟大的传统方面竟与现代的小说家们是如此地相通。他与劳伦斯、福特·马克多斯·福特和 E·M·福斯特一起，把这崇尚传统与天长地久的平静世

界与正在逐渐破坏这个古老的世界的喧嚣、粗野的商业社会形成了鲜明的对照。乔治·温又拓深了这一观点。他指出,《远离尘嚣》中的彭尼威斯这个人物就犹如侵入到这健康生活之中的一条蛀虫,因此我们可以把他看成是这种破坏力量的象征。

既然我们肯定哈代被评论家们看作是一位伟大的小说家,那么我们在这里最好也来探讨一下(特别是联系《远离尘嚣》一书)被评论家们多次探讨过的他的小说特色。

情节: 詹姆斯·赖特和其他一些评论家认为哈代小说的情节是对称的。赖特还为《远离尘嚣》画出了情节脉路图。约瑟夫·华伦·比奇也同意这种说法:情节在哈代的小说中是至关重要的。而且他还进一步指出,实际上,没有情节就没有哈代的小说。比奇又补充道,情节中前后不符的情况也是有的;有时为了克服这一缺点,哈代不得不运用“上帝的机器”这种写作技巧。评论家们又提出这样一个值得思考的问题:背景是为情节设计的呢,抑或情节是为背景设计的?比奇认为,至少在《远离尘嚣》这部小说中,作者打腹稿的时候脑子里先有的是背景,然后情节才为之应运而生。正是由于这个原因,哈代才有时不得不借用外来的力量解决情节上的问题。

E·M·福斯特和艾伯克龙比两人都赞赏哈代的情节结构,但艾伯克龙比称赞的是哈代能够“使错综复杂的情节清晰易懂”并使小说中“趣事横生”;福斯特却赞赏哈代设计情节时独具匠心,赞赏他特别注重情节的随意性。或许他会反对比奇所说的在哈代的多数小说中背景先于情节的说法,因为他认为情节是小说的基础,人物的活动都是为了适应情节的需要而设计的。但他并不像比奇一样,认为《远离尘嚣》不同于哈代其他重要的小说。最近的一项对情节结构研究的结果(研究者为瓦尔特·奥格雷迪)认为在把情节与小说合二为一方面,哈代在詹姆斯之下,因为哈代的事件总是“外向的”或“逆反的”(换句话说,就是情节的随意性总是依赖于前面的事件——这一点在艾伯克龙比看来并不是什么缺点)。

从以上的这些对情节的错综纷乱、令人迷惑的见解中，我们能发现什么共同之处呢？无论如何，我们都可以肯定地说哈代的情节是对称设计的。在每部小说中都有着明显的相同的模式：每个情节都是由前一个情节引起的并完全依赖于它。如果我们想和一些现代的评论家一起来探讨哈代作为小说家的地位，我们不妨再看看他的情节以外的另一些特点。

诗歌般的语言特征： 在《小说面面观》这本书中，E·M·福斯特给我们评价哈代提供了一条重要的线索。那就是从体质上说，哈代是一位诗人。格拉德赞同福斯特的观点，认为把作为小说家的哈代和作为诗人的哈代联系起来看待是一个重要的发现。正是由于哈代小说中诗歌般语言的运用才使得他和现代的小说家们站到了一起。在这种研究中，对他那诗歌般的语言运用的研究扩展到了对哈代整体的语言与象征手法运用的研究上。

赖特也认为诗歌般的语言为哈代的作品又开拓了另一个侧面。一个人同为小说家和诗人并不矛盾。不但如此，他还把诗歌的语言用到了小说之中。赖特还指出，在《远离尘嚣》中，对自然景色的描写并不仅仅是词藻的堆砌，它已经渗透到了小说的灵魂之中。

哈代的诗歌般的语言包括他对方言的运用（艾伯克龙比认为方言的运用如果算不上准确的话，它的效果起码是很好的）；另外，他对引喻的运用也为小说增添了一种微妙的力度。《远离尘嚣》中的引喻非常丰富，有对《圣经》的引用，也有对其他文学作品的引用。比奇认为他对《圣经》的引用在小说中的效果最好，因为它很自然地贴近了村民们简朴的生活。对文学作品的引用有些牵强附会，比喻有时显得很可笑（如把加布里埃看到芭思希芭的第一眼和弥尔顿的《失乐园》中撒旦第一次窥见天堂的情形相提并论）。还有一个特别可笑的对《圣经》的引用：当莉迪看到一群村民走过来时，她把他们叫作“腓力斯人”。

最近，对哈代小说中诗歌技巧运用感兴趣的评论家们一直在研究他作品中的象征运用的层次。选用"奥克"作为加布里埃的姓氏的用意是显而易见的。但还有一些更加微妙的用法，例如理查德·C·卡彭特所探讨的"镜子"与"剑"这两个意象的意义。

人物刻画： 如果在《远离尘嚣》中我们找不到哈代晚期作品中的那种心理刻画深度的话，那么我们至少可以从他把乡村人物的刻画与背景和情节很好地结合起来这一点上得到些安慰。格拉德对于村民群像描写的评论支持了艾伯克龙比关于"村民们行动一致"的看法。这部小说比后来的几部小说具有的更明显的一个特征就是村民们对事情的反应非常一致（或者说大致相同），比如在普尔格拉斯遗忘了范妮的尸体这件事上，村民们个个都参与了进来，并且左右了事态的进程。

谈到这些村民时，格拉德说他们有的只是过去，作者很少涉及他们的现在。他们对痛苦与变化无动于衷。他们的稳定性在事件的发展与人物的性格方面起着举足轻重的作用。用乔治·温的话说，这些村民是旧的生活方式与迷信的化身。所有的评论家都认为村民的刻画为小说增加了力度与深度。

赖特在称赞加布里埃这个人物的沉稳、有耐力和宽容这些品格时超过了很多其他评论家。我们对其他人物与事件的评价也是通过与加布里埃"明智的忍让"态度的对比而得出的。温甚至也不同意特罗伊就是一个地地道道的恶棍的说法。特罗伊是个敢作敢为的男人。他的忠诚与冷酷都可看作是对女性控制的抵抗。在对博德伍德的刻画中甚至还搀杂着一些心理方面的探究。所以，很明显地我们还应对哈代小说中的人物刻画做进一步的研究。这将有助于我们评价哈代作为小说家的实力。

幽默： 把幽默当作哈代的小说的一个特色来讨论听上去不免有些奇怪，特别是他常被人称作是一位"维多利亚时期的悲观主义

者”。在哈代后期的一些小说中，他也常常与那些左右人物行为的外来力量抗争。我们从范妮被阴差阳错地送到另外一个教堂的事例中对此就可略见一斑。如果幽默在别的作品中还不是那么明显的话，那么在评价《远离尘嚣》这部小说时，幽默就是一个很重要的因素了。

首先，村民的谈话和行为中所流露出的幽默就是显而易见的。当凯尼·贝尔从巴思城回来告诉大家他看见了芭思希芭和特罗伊时，读者的好奇心被调动到了最高点。加布里埃和工人们在一旁耐心地等着听他们所关心的消息，而凯尼却在另一旁时而结结巴巴、时而唾沫飞溅。之后，加布里埃又惊愕地看着村民们和凯尼一起大笑起来，大家忙着问凯尼他的巴思城之行。温指出这是全书中最幽默的一段，但这并不是唯一的一段：科根与普尔格拉斯在交易会上的洋相、拉班·塔尔和他那凶悍的太太之间的趣事还有剪羊毛庆祝会上大家在一起取乐的情景都堪称幽默之笔。艾伯克龙比把这部小说中幽默的风格称作是“莎士比亚式的”，并说这种幽默正适合那些村民的性格，因为它和都市生活的那种世故的机智相去甚远。格里姆斯迪奇附合着众多的评论界人士，称赞这种幽默是“罕见的、怪诞的喜剧之作”。

讽刺： 小说中也多次运用了讽刺的手法。当特罗伊在范妮坟前种的花被雨水无情地冲走的时候，作者的笔调是冷嘲式的。比奇是指出这部作品中使用了讽刺手法的有功之臣。他指出连小说的题目都具有讽刺意味：即使在这种平静的背景之下，“不光彩的争斗”也无处不在，它使平静的生活变得异常复杂。

总结： 无论评论家们在看待哈代对称设计的情节上看法多么纷繁不一，我们还是能够找到他们对哈代的一致好评：哈代对村民群像的刻画效果非同凡响，他那诗歌般的语言（特别是引喻和象征）为他的小说拓展了一个新的层次，他的幽默又使十分悲哀的事件显得轻松了许多。大多数的这些特征与他对英国传统持久的兴

趣一起使哈代成为一位重要的作家。

《远离尘嚣》是一部不太重要的作品，也许它缺少哈代后期作品的那种高度和深度，但这恰恰是因为哈代在这部早期作品中正在发展、完善他的小说技巧。但是赖特认为这部小说有其独特的品质，使得大多数的读者感到它很亲切。人们或因它的语言喜爱它，或因它的幽默感喜欢它，而赖特先生喜欢的则是它的人物刻画，特别是加布里埃这个人物，“他是这片清新的绿色土地上的杰出人物。”无论是因为这部作品具备了这一长处还是因为它具备了其他诸多长处，人们都在继续翻看、喜爱着它。正如怀特先生所说：“这部书中有一种特别吸引人的东西，它使人们一如既往地喜欢它……甚至不受任何偏见的影响。”